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Maud of the

GEN'L GRANT'S DARING SPY
PASSING THE VICKSBURG BATTERIES DURING A TERRIBLE STORM

Mississippi.

C. W. ALEXANDER & CO.,
PUBLISHERS,
123 SOUTH THIRD STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

Miss Maud Melville, better known as Miss Pauline D'Estraye, bidding General Grant farewell previous to her departure for Vicksburg.

SOLDIERS OF THE UNION:

It is with the deepest pleasure that the author of PAULINE OF THE POTOMAC, dedicates to you the following narrative of a lovely and heroic maiden, who, from the very commencement of the war, has nobly devoted herself to the holy cause in which you are also engaged.

Kneeling by the death-bed of her father, she solemnly vowed, before Heaven, to espouse the bright flag of American Freedom. How well she kept her vow no proof beyond her glorious achievements, both under General McClellan and General Grant, is needed. The manner in which the facts of the narrative came into the hands of the author the annexed letter will show.

Yours &c Wesley Bradshaw

WASHINGTON, JAN. 15th., 1864.

TO WESLEY BRADSHAW, ESQ.,

Philadelphia, Pa.,

DEAR SIR: Yours of January 1st came duly to hand. I have been very busy night and day in my department since then; so much so, indeed, that I feared I would not be able to attend to the matter to which you referred. But I am happy to state to you that I have at last been enabled to accomplish the desired object, and I herewith send you a collection of papers from which you can elicit all the facts you need.

Maud, or rather Pauline, is a glorious girl, and most decidedly the Evil Genius of the Rebel rulers. You cannot laud her too highly. The Army, the Navy, the Government, and indeed the whole nation, owe her an overwhelming debt of gratitude.

Neither Mr. Lincoln, nor General Grant, could have any objection whatever.

Any other information you may need at any time while you are writing the narrative, I will obtain for you—if not contraband—with the utmost pleasure.

Yours, Truly,

A—— D—— N———.

Alexander, Charles Wesley.

MAUD OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

A COMPANION TO

PAULINE OF THE POTOMAC.

BY WESLEY BRADSHAW, pseud

Author of "Pauline of the Potomac," "The Volunteers' Roll of Honor," "General Corcoran's Captivity," "General McClellan's Dream," "The Picket Slayer," &c., &c.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE OF THE ADVENTURES

OF

MISS PAULINE D'ESTRAYE,

A YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL FRENCH LADY,

WHO, AFTER PERFORMING THE MOST HEROIC DEEDS IN VIRGINIA, IN BEHALF OF THE UNION, WAS SENT OFFICIALLY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI, WHERE SHE RENDERED HERSELF FOR EVER FAMOUS BY HER CONSPICUOUS DARING AND BRAVERY DURING

THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN

UNDER

MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY C. W. ALEXANDER & CO.

123 SOUTH THIRD STREET.

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MAUD OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

CHAPTER I.

WHO MAUD MELVILLE WAS.

The last sunset of the year 1862 shed its rays almost promisingly upon the cause of the unholy Rebellion. Several very serious repulses and disasters had befallen the armies of the Union, which, however, so far from discouraging the loyal States, only determined them to still more tremendous exertions.

At the time of which we write, Vicksburg, Mississippi, the doorway to the granaries of the Confederacy, was a point that had awakened the most intense interest and anxiety, not alone in our own country, but also in Europe. In fact so much importance began to be attached to the speedy capture of this stronghold, that General U. S. Grant, after several of his most able assistants had failed in the work, went thither to try his own skill. The result was proclaimed to the world on the next natal day of the Republic, amidst the joyous salvos of artillery that pealed heavenward from the blood-stained heights of Gettysburg. Heroes of the West, heroes of the East, well done! Vicksburg! Gettysburg! twin victories that forced Rebellion back exhausted to its lair, and wrung from astounded Europe a justice that she would otherwise have withheld.

The Vicksburg campaign will remain for all time to come a study for military minds. Splendid in its occasional failures, and magnificent in its final success, it reflects the highest credit upon its originator, Major General Ulysses S. Grant. Yet his glory is shared with others, who, though not brought continually to the public eye, nevertheless sustained most important *roles* in the drama of which he was the chief actor.

One evening as the General sat musing over the last report that had been sent to him by General McClernand, and was turning the subject over in his mind, a young lady was announced on important business.

"Maud Melville!" he exclaimed, glancing at the neat chirography of the delicate card that was placed in his hand by the orderly, "well, well, I'll see her, pass her in."

A few moments later the fair visitor entered the room in which Grant sat. The latter immediately rose, and, stepping forward, placed a chair for the lady, opening the conversation as he did so, with that dignity and graceful ease which characterize a well bred gentleman.

"I have just arrived from Washington, General," said Maud, in answer to a question by Grant, "and I beg of you to glance at these letters? They will better explain the object of my coming than I can do orally."

With these words the speaker drew forth and placed in the hand of the General, two envelopes, one of which was stamped "*Presidential Mansion*" and the other "*State Department.*"

The appearance and address of his beautiful and accomplished visitor, had at the very first forcibly struck the General, and his interest was much deepened as his eye rested upon the words we have recorded and also the directions of the envelopes, the first in the plain, heavy hand of the President, and the second evidently penned by the master diplomatist of America.

Seating himself, Grant opened and attentively perused each letter.

"Really, Miss D'Estraye, excuse me, Miss Melville," said the General, as he concluded his reading, I know not whether to acknowledge myself more surprised at your gallant achievements during General McClellan's campaign, or more delighted at your present desire to serve the Union cause in the future operations against Vickburg. The greatest obstacle we have to surmount is the lack of information as to the real condition and movements of the enemy. I have as yet come across no spy nor scout whose reports could be fully relied on. But, from the high enconiums passed on you by the President and Mr. Seward, I am led to entertain the highest expectations of yourself.

"I hope," replied Maud "that neither Mr. Lincoln nor Mr. Seward has said aught which might lead you, General, to expect too much from me."

"Neither of them, Miss Melville, would write one whit beyond the truth. But, aside from that, I would ask no better recommendation

of your sterling abilities, than your own deeds in the Eastern Department. The narative thereof, that was published a short time since, approached so nearly a romance that, but for the actual facts recorded therein, the reader might easily have believed himself perusing one."

"You flatter me, General," said Maud with a modest smile.

"By no means, Miss Melville," answered Grant, "I speak but the simple truth. Your capture of the Rebel spy, Dallett, and afterward of the Signal Code of the Confederate Army, were, alone, two acts, no praise of which could approach flattery. They were worth to the Union a hundred thousand men both East and West. But tell me," added the speaker, as though a half unpleasant thought had come into his mind at the moment, "are you as well acquainted with the Vicksburg region of country as you are with that of the Atlantic States!"

There came with the close of this question an unmistakable trace of anxiety upon Grant's features, which, however, passed instantly away as Maud replied:

"If anything, General, I am better acquainted with it than with any other portion of the country. I passed several years of my life there."

"And have you no fear, Miss Melville? Why, the most ample promises of reward have failed to induce the most daring of my scouts or spies to penetrate into the city itself, to ascertain the exact strength of the post, and what means there are for its reinforcement."

"In the performance of my duty, General, toward my adopted country, I fear nothing. Thus far God has vouchsafed to me His care and protection, and He will do the same in the future, unless, for some wise end, He destines me to fall. In Him do I trust; let Him do as pleaseth Him good."

There was a deep piety in the manner of this reply, that awakened in General Grant's breast a feeling of veneration for his fair companion, and he silently regarded her for several moments, with increasing admiration.

She was the first to break the silence.

"General," said she, "are you revolving new designs in your mind for reaching the city in the rear from the Northeast?"

Grant started. Only half an hour previous he had been studying three or four different topographical maps to ascertain all the information he could in regard to the network of rivers and bayous that lay between Yazoo Pass and Vicksburg. And he felt very confident of the success of at least two routes thus presented.

"Why do you ask that question, Miss Melville?" inquired the General with a smile.

"Because," replied Maud, promptly, "it would, from the number of its rivers, seem to promise certain success; but, from what I know of the country in that direction, I feel certain that to get through it with success would be an impossibility."*

"Well," said Grant, "Vicksburg must be taken, whether it is moved upon from the Northeast, or all the points of the compass at once. But tell me," he continued, turning the conversation into another channel—for, like all good Generals, he cared not to talk of his plans, especially to a woman—"is the reason given here in the President's letter, the full one for your changing your name from Pauline D'Estraye to Maud Melville?"†

"It is, General," rejoined Maud

"And tell me also," resumed Grant, "by whose advice did you assume the name of Maud? I merely wish to see if I did not guess rightly."

"Mr. Lincoln's," answered Maud smiling.

"And in return," continued Grant, "I think I can tell you *why* he suggested that name. Was it not because "*Maud of the Mississippi,*" would make a very beautiful and companionable title to "*Pauline of The Potomac?*"

"Exactly the reason, General," rejoined Maud Melville—for by this fictitious name we must hereafter call our heroine. And she burst into a merry laugh, in which, despite the weight of official care upon his mind, the General heartily joined.

"Well, Miss Melville," said he, at last, "if, as 'Maud of the Mississippi,' you render to our holy cause services as valuable as you did under the title of 'Pauline of The Potomac,' you will earn not only the gratitude but also the love of the nation."

"Greater reward could no mortal ask, General!" answered Maud, with unaffected earnestness.

"One more question, Miss Melville," said Grant, speaking in tones of the kindest suavity. "The President and Mr. Seward both refer in their letters to a sad bereavement that has befallen you. May I ask the nature thereof?"

No tear came to the beautiful eyes of Maud, but the tremor of a deeper grief than bids tears to flow, was on her voice as she rejoined:

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*A fact that the indomitable hero of the Mississippi subsequently proved to be correct after the most Herculean exertions.

†As the MMS. furnished the author does not give this reason alluded to by General Grant, we suppose that its publication, even at this date, is contraband.

"There was a dear one, General, whom chance threw in my way whilst a prisoner in the South. Like myself he had been captured while serving his country. Together we suffered, together we escaped, and together we had promised ourselves to spend a happy future. But Providence ordained otherwise. He had been wounded; I nursed him with the tenderest care, and, when he became strong enough to bear his sword, I sent him, with my blessing, to join battle once more with the foe. He went forth with high resolve and buoyant hopes, and the next I learned of him was, that his were among the thousand glassy eyes that stared skyward on the ramparts of Fredericksburg. My heart went out to him then, and now lies with his mouldering form in the grave of his glory and honor. The tomb, General, now holds all that was dear to me. Henceforth, to the land of my adoption shall I devote myself."

The lovely speaker bowed her head upon her clasped hands as she ended, and remained in silence for a little space; a silence which the touched feelings of the noble soldier would not permit him to interrupt.

"Well, General," at last resumed Maud, looking up, "I am here for action. I am ready to set forth on any mission you may wish. You spoke awhile ago of having been unable to ascertain anything about the interior of Vicksburg."

"And are you willing to hazard the accomplishment of my wishes in regard to that city?" asked General Grant, his emotions divided by surprise and delight.

"I am most willing to do so, General," rejoined Maud, promptly.

"Then report to me, Miss Melville, at these headquarters to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock precisely," said Grant, drawing forth and consulting his watch as he spoke.

"Is there a ship or boat builder near here, or at any convenient point on the Mississippi, General?" inquired Maud, as she arose to take her departure.

Once more was Grant surprised.

"A ship or boat builder!" reiterated he, "yes, Miss Melville, there are several on the Mississippi; but pray, why do you ask the question?"

"Because, General, I shall, in order to reach Vicksburg, pass its batteries, and, after landing at a point above Warrenton or Grand Gulf, thence make my way whither I choose."

"Pass the batteries!" exclaimed the soldier, astounded, "and in a frail boat! Why, my own iron clads would be riddled in ten minutes if they attempted that feat."

"Nevertheless, General, "rejoined Maud, I will accomplish it in safety. My boat shall be constructed on my own plan, and I have brought with me a peculiar sail of grey silk, that will carry me from Memphis to New Orleans if need be. However, I will explain more fully to you in the morning, General. Good evening."

"Good evening, Miss Melville."

This sudden parting between General Grant and his fair companion was caused by the entrance of two staff officers, who, from the disorder of their dress, which was mud from top to bottom, evidently came on important, official business.

CHAPTER II.

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI.

On the morning succeeding the interview that our heroine had with General Grant, the former reported punctually at the headquarters of the latter at eight o'clock. So punctually, in fact, that the seventh stroke of the town bell was just quivering as she made her courtesey to the commander of the Mississippi campaign.

"Good morning, good morning, Miss Melville," said General Grant, in his most pleasant manner, as, rising from his chair, he stepped forward to greet his fair visitor, "I see the heavy rain does not interfere with your habit of military promptness."

"Ah, no, General," answered Maud, "I know the value of minutes in military movements."

"Ah! Miss Melville," quickly rejoined Grant, "would to Heaven our commanders could all be taught that important lesson. But," added the speaker, abruptly, "let us get to business."

He drew up two chairs to a table, and striking a bell, brought by the summons an orderly into his presence.

"Orderly!" commanded he, in positive tones, "I do not wish to be interrupted. Refuse admittance to everybody except Captain Billings, should he wish to see me."

The sergeant touched his cap, bowed, and withdrew to instruct the guard as to his duty.

"Now, then, Miss Melville," continued General Grant, addressing his beautiful companion, "the first matter in hand, I believe, is that boat, concerning which you spoke last night."

"I have brought the plan thereof with me, General," replied Maud, seating herself in the nearest of the two chairs, and spreading upon the table a large sheet of paper before Grant.

The latter unfolded the sheet, and inspected, with fixed and silent attention, one or two drawings in section and profile that were penned upon it.

"Well, Miss Maud!" exclaimed the General, after his inspection, "I think I see perfectly well the principle, but I must ask of you an explanation of one or two minor points."

With this remark, Grant pushed the paper toward Maud, who forthwith entered upon a full detail of both the principle and application.

The only facts, however, that may at this time be given to the public are, that the boat proposed by Maud was so ingeniously constructed that it could, in five minutes, be lapped, or rather rolled into one compact and almost solid piece. In this shape it could be sunk close in to shore, and remain uninjured by the action of the water for a long time. It was also so light that Maud herself, though by no means powerful, could, with some little exertion, transport it from the river to any spot ashore that she chose. The sail was triangular in shape, and had been selected by our heroine of a smoky-grey silk, of the best yet lightest texture. The peculiarity of the color rendered it invisible, even on a starlit night, at a comparatively short distance, and as the boat was to be painted the same hue as the sail, detection even by the sharpest sighted sentinel would be next to impossible.

General Grant was pleased, nay more, he was delighted with the ingenious invention, and requested Maud, when she had finished her explanations in regard to it, to inform him who the author of it was.

"His name," rejoined she, "was Jerome Antonelli, General. He was a magician by profession, and born in the city of Rome. In one of those spasmodic efforts at independence that Italy is continually making, Antonelli rendered the liberal party the most valuable aid in the capacity of a spy. Such a position suited his daring and inventive mind. This peculiar boat, the plans of which you have just examined, was conceived and made by himself.

"Lack of unity in action soon brought the yoke back on Italy's neck, and Antonelli, with others, fled to France.

"There my father had it in his power to assist him, for which he was extremely grateful. His visits to my father's house were often, and his greatest delight was to explain to me the *modus operandi* of his various performances in magic. Several times he described to me this peculiar boat, but never dreaming that I, a child of luxury and wealth, should ever have use for one, I forgot his descriptions. While

serving the Union cause in Virginia I often regretted my inattention, and resolved, if possible, to recall Antonelli's description. But in vain, until a short time since, when the whole affair flashed upon me one morning, just after I had risen for the day."

"It is really a wonderful invention, Miss Melville," said General Grant, once more examining the drawings. "And," added he, with a meaning smile, "I will guarantee that you will find use for its best qualities if you run the batteries at Vicksburg."

"And I will in turn guarantee, General," rejoined Maud, "that it will not fail me."

"Well, Miss Melville, when will you be ready to set out for Vicksburg?"

"The moment I have this boat finished."

"There is an order, then, to Captain R——, at Memphis. And, as you will of course have expenses, here is cash to meet them."

Maud took the order that General Grant wrote, but refused the roll of Treasury notes with the words:

"You must excuse me, General, but I bear my own expenses. I have never yet received from the Government a dollar, and so long as the remnant of my own fortune which is outside the boundaries of the rebellion lasts, so long will I continue to receive nothing. I am thoroughly convinced that what I do is only my duty."

General Grant was still more astonished at his fair companion than he had yet been, and he failed not to compliment her upon her disinterested patriotism.

"Well now," said he, finally, "I wish, Miss Melville, to ascertain, first, what roads could be used most effectually in approaching Vicksburg from the rear, and also, more particularly, the exact condition of the rebel naval affairs on the Yazoo river. I have received information, on which, however, I cannot fully depend, that there has lately arrived at Yazoo city an immense amount of coal and iron, and that several confederate rams are almost ready for an attack upon our fleet."

"All of which, General," answered Maud, "I think I shall not experience much difficulty in finding out."

"I hope, indeed, you will not, Miss Melville; but I feel it my imperative duty to assure you the enemy is fully on the alert."

"Which will only render me the more cautious, General," said Maud, smilingly, in reply to Grant's remark.

In less than an hour after exchanging farewells with the hero of the Mississippi, our dauntless, beautiful heroine was on her way to see Captain R——, of Memphis. That gallant and assiduous officer,

with the assistance of a trustworthy workman, speedily constructed the little vessel in which the fair adventurer was to set out on her perilous mission.

Captain R——, on the night selected by Maud for her start, escorted her down to the river, and assisted her to open and fasten the light vessel in which she was so fearlessly about to brave the waves of the Mississippi. The silken sail was set, the rudder hung, and, stepping from the shore, our heroine seated herself, seized the tiller in one hand and the boom line in the other.

"Farewell, Captain R——," she exclaimed in a firm, clear voice to her companion, who was so surprised—for he had until now felt sure that Maud would forego her attempt at the last moment—that he actually stammered out his reply.

Caught by the freshening breeze the fairy craft shot from the bank, and almost instantly disappeared. Like a disturbed bird it seemed to start from the rippling water close at Captain R——'s feet, and skim along the top of the water out into the gloom of mid-river.

"Well," muttered the soldier, after straining his eyes to their utmost strength, "those French girls, or at least that particular one, beats the very devil himself! She's brave enough; but if her bravery keeps her from the bottom of the Mississippi till daylight, I'm out of my reckoning!"

The gallant soldier was the more induced to this opinion by Maud's refusal to take passage on one of the gunboats down to Milliken's Bend, just above Vicksburg, on the opposite side of the river. She had her own reasons, however, for the course she pursued, though she did not impart them to the Captain.

To many a mind that counts itself heroic the unparalleled act of Maud Melville in thus committing herself at night to the mercy of the mighty river, would appear actually appalling. Yet, such was the reliance of the lovely girl upon the security of her little craft, that the farther it sped from the shore the more confident did she become in its powers. And in truth we must add that Maud's confidence was not misplaced, for each turbid wave was met and skimmed over by the fairy vessel with the graceful ease of a swallow.

After tacking once or twice, and manœuvering about somewhat, our heroine at last turned her face down stream upon her long journey of peril. She accomplished many miles ere day began to dawn when, drawing into a protected cove, she landed, and prepared a frugal but sufficient meal from provisions that she had taken good care to bring along with her.

This over, she gathered branches of trees from the forest, and covered her boat in such a manner as to give it the appearance of the leafy portion of a floating tree. Beneath these she concealed herself with care, and once more floated away in the direction of Vicksburg. So complete was the disguise, that, although during the course of the day she passed and was overtaken by several vessels, she was undiscovered. As soon as night fell, she threw off the branches, and hoisting the silken sail, hurried forward before a stronger wind than there had been the previous night.

Though warmly clad, Maud suffered considerably with the cold, and would, doubtless, have been seriously inconvenienced thereby, had it not been for her precautions.

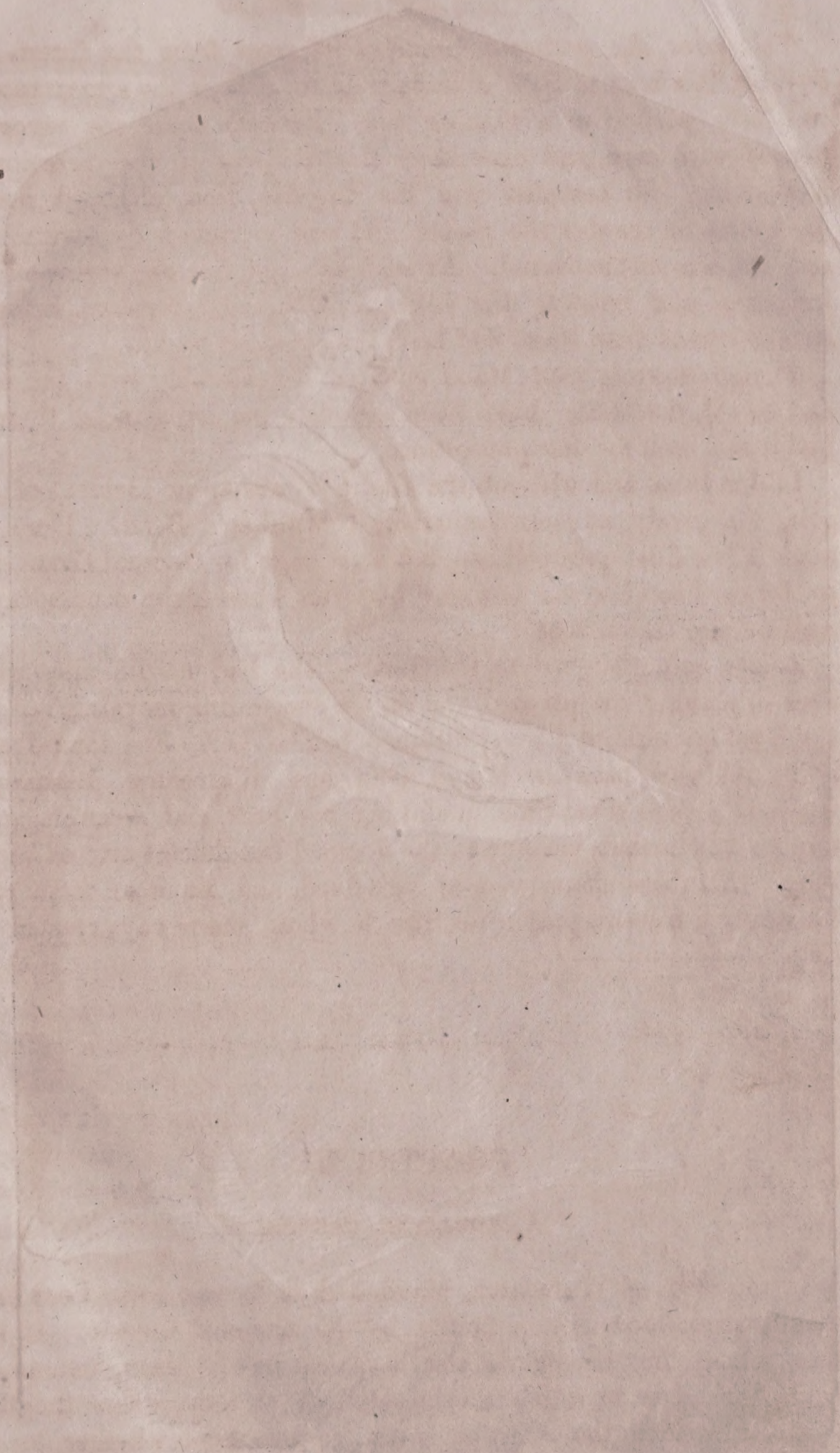
In due time, and without the slightest mishap or incident of any sort, the lovely adventuress reached Milliken's Bend. Here she made a few final preparations, left a message for General Grant, and set forward to view the frowning batteries whose grim cannon lay in wait for the Union fleet.

As she had predicted to the General, she had no difficulty whatever in making the passage, and on the succeeding morning had left the rebel stronghold a good distance behind her. She landed at a point midway between Grand Gulf and Warrenton, Mississippi, where she spent some time in sinking her boat, and arranging matters for her farther journey to the doomed but defiant city of Vicksburg. All these affairs were at last fixed, and Maud set forth, after breathing a fervent prayer to Him in whom she always trusted for help.

CHAPTER III.

A WOULD-BE CAPTOR.

In the town of Warrenton, Maud had in former times been intimately acquainted with a family by the name of Corwin. It had been a long, long time since she had seen any of them, and as she neared the place in which they resided, or, at least, where they had formerly resided, the question arose in her mind whether or not their friendship was changed with the times. If they held the doctrine of secession, and should learn that she was serving the cause of the old Union, her arrest, conviction, and execution as a spy



This is a perfect likeness of the celebrated Union Spy, Maud Melville, better known as Miss Pauline D'Estraye, and was drawn specially for us by Howell.

were events that would follow each other with a certain and terribly speedy sequence.

While revolving this exceedingly delicate point in her mind, Maud was nearing the town, and had just passed into a deep wood to the Southward thereof, when her progress was stayed by the sound of voices. In a moment her caution was doubled, and never did Indian scout approach a place or victim with such adroitness or so silently as she. A bunch of dry and tangled branches lay in the only path she could use, and this with the utmost patience and care she removed, stick by stick and twig by twig. At the very moment, however, that the last twig had been laid softly on one side of the path, a small bird sprang from a bush just in front, uttering a chirrup of alarm, and taking its flight directly over the spot from which the voices came. The next instant the latter were hushed, and a silence ensued almost as profound as that of the tomb. Maud crouched down to the very earth, and instinctively clapped her hand to her heart, fearful that its throbbings might discover her to the strangers. She lost not, however, a whit of her presence of mind; but, drawing a revolver, watched keenly for the presence of an enemy. As she did so, she espied, between the branches of a thick bush that sheltered her, a rough skin cap, such as is generally worn by hunters, rising stealthily above another bush a few paces distant. Then she saw a strip of brown, furrowed forehead come up beneath the cap, then a pair of piercing black eyes, then a large, aquiline nose, and two patches of sunburnt cheeks, furrowed like the strip of forehead, and lost, like the mouth and chin, in a huge black beard. Then came a pair of brawny, gray-clad shoulders, and the vignette was complete. The whole countenance had risen regularly and slowly as a moulded vapor, and now, with caution and ferocity mingled in its expression, stood scanning the forest in the direction of herself. Maud thought herself discovered; but after a short suspense, the head disappeared below the top of the bush that concealed the body, and the voices immediately recommenced the conversation that the bird's alarm had so suddenly silenced.

Maud mentally offered a prayer of thanks that discretion forbade her lips to utter aloud, and within a few minutes she was so close to the spot where the objects of her curiosity were, that every word of what they said was distinctly audible. So dense was the wall of underbrush that separated her and them, however, that she could not obtain even a glimpse of them, and there was too much risk attending an effort to part the screening foliage.

"Tell you what, boys," said one of the unseen speakers, "that

there Grant 's a team, and that there Porter 's another team; and if the pair of 'em don't show Jeff Davis where his mule* is, I'm not a rebel, that's all!"

"Ah! don't you worry 'bout that 'ere, Bill," said a rough, brutal voice; "Uncle Jeff aint no Swope, I want yer to know; an' if that d——d Abe Lincoln, or Grant, or Porter, or anybody else, kin head him into a narrer lane, an' *keep* him there, yer may confiscate me an' be durned; that there's my opine, an' that there's my say. Another thing, too, I want yer to know," quickly continued the speaker, as though wishing to add to his former remark ere any of his companions said anything, "Jeff Davis, besides a-bein' a devilish smart man naturally, studied all this here bisness out many and many a year that's gone. He knows the trails! And the place where he'll keep his mule all safe from Grant or Porter 'll be in Washington itself. That's his play, and it gives him a winnin' ace!"

"Well now, Jake, that depends on circumstances, after all's said and done," said a third voice.

"How does it?" asked two or three in unison.

"Why," was the reply, "suppose something or other turns up to set aside a part of his plans; for instance, suppose that the army gets dissatisfied, and won't stick to him; or one of the States, for instance North Carolina or Louisiana, backs out of the Confederacy, —what then?"

"What then?" sneeringly rejoined the rough, brutal voice, "what then? Why Jeff 'll *show* 'em what then! I tell yer he's got all them 'ere little lanes an' dodgin' alleys laid out aforehand."

"Well, well, comrades, do not let us waste time over what may never happen. But let us settle this adventure of our own. A few such projects carefully and successfully carried out, are worth half a dozen victories in which we lose as many men as the Yankees."

This voice, which seemed somewhat familiar to Maud, spoke with authority, and a moment later she heard the group moving away through the bushes toward a bridle path that led to the town. To follow immediately would be perhaps to discover herself to the plotters; and what the result would be, needed not an imagination as strong as her own to picture. However, as the retreating sounds grew more and more indistinct, our heroine could not repress her desire to endeavor to at least catch a glimpse of the party. She

"Where's your mule?" is a popular expression in the South-west, in regard to any undertaking or difficulty,—one of those half undefinable colloquial expressions which are strong at the expense of elegance.

therefore moved with hasty but cautious steps to a point where she could observe her foes without being seen herself. There were four of them, and in the tall, heavily-built figure of the foremost she immediately recognized Malcolm Corwin, the eldest son of Mrs. Corwin.

"Ah, traitor!" murmured the lovely and anxious watcher, "Providence has pointed you out to me, and I will keep you constantly in view."

As though, however, to prove the mistake she had made, the four men all suddenly disappeared behind a house that stood on the immediate outskirts of the town.

"To follow," soliloquized Maud, unconsciously, in her eagerness, "is to run a risk almost certain of capture; to remain where I am is as certainly to lose sight of the villains; and to lose sight of them, I am sure, will be to render myself incapable of frustrating some plot of evil against the cause of the Union."

"I myself will render you incapable of doing that, my patriotic love!" exclaimed a bitter, hissing voice at this juncture.

Maud experienced, as the ominous sounds of that solitary human voice fell upon her ears, that utter prostration of heart and soul, that paralyzing fear which sudden peril often brings upon the bravest. Only for an instant, however, was she the victim of this terror, for in a moment more she turned sharply round in the direction of the voice.

A tall, brawny man stood almost within reach of her; so close, in fact, that she instinctively sprang back a pace. The stranger's long, black beard, and rough, broad-brimmed hat, did not prevent her recognizing the intruder as Malcolm Corwin. She had made a mistake in supposing that the leader of the group of which she had just lost sight was he. Doubtless the strong expectation of seeing some one of the Corwins at or about Warrenton had induced her to the erroneous belief, especially as one of the voices she had heard in converse seemed familiar to her. Though her ears had deceived her, her eyes did not, for it was certainly Malcolm Corwin who now confronted her.

Upon making this discovery, Maud grew more confident than if he had been a stranger, for she well remembered that he had always borne the reputation of being a despicable coward. She was in the act of addressing him when he interrupted her with:

"Well, Miss Pauline, it's been a good while since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and upon my soul I never expected to have such a romantic meeting as this. Make a splendid stage scene, wouldn't it? A group of rebels having a quiet little confab in a thicket, and

an angelic girl creeping close up outside, like an eavesdropping Indian. Something startles her and the rebels too. She draws a pistol ready for an emergency, and resolves to do or die. The rebels become assured, and resume their conversation; but in the meantime dispatch one of their number to reconnoitre. He creeps quietly off, makes a little circuit, comes up in the rear, finds my lady bird in ambush, and, to make the scene complete, makes her his prisoner, thus!"

With these words the speaker, who, as we have said, was tall and brawny, made a half spring towards Maud, whom, of course, he knew only by her real name, Pauline. Like lightning flash, however, the heroic girl avoided his grasp, and an instant later the deadly barrel of her weapon was leveled with so true an aim at his heart, that his life depended on the touch of her finger.

Though Maud was thus well armed, her attacker had supposed that she, whom he knew to have been raised as tenderly as the delicate house lily, was entirely unused to revolvers, and could not use one. At a glance he saw the folly of this belief, and between his astonishment and fright,—for he was so close that he could almost see the ball within the muzzle of the piece,—he was utterly unable to even beg for mercy.

Maud, still keeping her revolver directed at Corwin's heart, thus broke the silence:

"I think the scene is finished with a fine tableau, Mr. Corwin! the more striking because the more unexpected to you! Is it not so?"

Though these words were spoken in a low tone of gratification and determination, there was a touch of mischief withal in them.

It was impossible that Malcolm Corwin, after finding himself still living, could at once recover his self-possession; and his voice was stammering, almost broken, as he replied, keeping his eyes always staring down into the pistol barrel:

"Excuse—me, Miss Pauline—I—I—didn't intend to harm you! Only a joke—that is—I—I—I'm sorry that it was you. Please low—lower your pistol! Oh! for God's sake don't fire! don't!"

The last part of this sentence came from Corwin's ashy lips like shots; for as he was stammering he chanced to raise his glance from the revolver to Maud's face. There he thought he saw a fierceness indicative of a determination to take his life, and therefore, dropping the little attempt he was making to lie, he thus begged for his existence.

"Deceit and cowardice are well matched in you, Malcolm Cor-

win," replied Maud, contemptuously; "and if the Rebel Confederacy depends in future for its prisoners upon retainers of your stripe, no exchange will ever be needed."

Whether Corwin noted what Maud said sufficiently well to understand it, was exceedingly doubtful, for, as though consumed with a fear of death, he again exclaimed, as he cowered backward:

"Oh, Miss Pauline! for Heaven's sake lower that pistol! I'm not fit to die! and if you were to twitch your finger only, I'd be gone!"

"Gone, doubtless, to the place you well deserve to go to!" rejoined Maud, throwing the greatest contempt into her manner, but at the same time partially acceding to the pitiful request of her cowardly would-be captor.

Corwin's gratitude was greater than his cowardice, and he promptly thanked Maud for her kind consideration.

Maud as heartily wished this disagreeable interview ended as did her unwilling companion, and for exactly the same reason as he—*personal safety*. He feared an accidental discharge of the revolver, while she dreaded the accidental appearance of some rebel traveler. She was the only one who could terminate the affair, and the question presented itself to her, how should she act in regard to the matter? At first she felt nonplussed; but she soon decided upon her course. Raising again her weapon to its old position, and thereby raising the terror of Corwin to a corresponding height, she again addressed that prince of poltroons.

"Malcolm Corwin, of course you never expected to see me here and in this manner, and I hardly expected to see you thus. But there is no turning Fate from its way, and our meeting has resulted. Now I wish to part with you speedily, either for life or for ever"—

"I'll go away," broke in Corwin; "but lower that pistol! It might go off! I'll go right away! I swear! I swear it before God!"

"Save your piety," said Maud, sternly; "you may need it all within two minutes!"

"Oh, don't, Miss Pauline, don't! I'll promise anything! I'll do anything!"

Never had our heroine seen such utter cowardice before, and she began to fear, from his increasing paleness, that Corwin would die from sheer fright. Suddenly it occurred to her that, beside getting clear of Malcolm, she might gain most valuable information from him, though the extra time required to do so would expose her to extra risk of capture. She could not resist the desire, however, and she forthwith began:

"Malcolm Corwin!"—the revolver was leveled more firmly than before, and produced a beneficial effect—"there are two or three conditions on which I spare you your life!"

"Name them!" name them! exclaimed Corwin, gasping with relief and dread; "but lower that pistol! do! it might go off!"

"Not a hair's breadth!" answered Maud, recognizing what a powerful and useful lever to her was this fear of death on the part of Corwin; "and if you fail to freely and fully answer all I may ask of you, your miserable existence shall instantly end."

"But some one will be passing," said Corwin, as though to gain time for consideration as to what he should do.

"In which case I shall be discovered! At that moment, Malcolm Corwin, your life ends!"

The suspense, or rather his fair companion's terrible determination, expressed as it was in every tone and feature, completely crumbled away what remnant was left of his manhood, and he begged of her to let him lead her into the thicket where his companions had been concealed, and where she would be perfectly secure from discovery.

Maud felt that the game was now in her own hands, and she was soon seated opposite her coward guide within the sheltering thicket. The magic of her control lay in the ready revolver and her own firmly expressed determination to use it.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW GENERAL GRANT'S SPY OBTAINED VALUABLE INFORMATION.

MAUD Melville implicitely believed in the truth of the saying that "treachery and cowardice are never parted;" and she therefore took every precaution upon entering the thicket to prevent her companion from playing any trick upon her.

"Now, Malcolm Corwin," spoke she, opening at once upon the subject she wished to converse upon, "I heard one of the group of your companions speaking in reference to some gigantic plot which he has, or they have, laid against the Union cause. What are the full details of that plot?"

As though stricken by a thunderbolt, Corwin started, and gazed half vacantly into the face of his fair interrogator.

"Indeed, Miss Pauline!" he said at length, somewhat recovering

himself, "indeed, Miss Pauline, I took a very solemn oath not to divulge anything about that; the solemnest kind of an oath."

"As you choose about the matter," replied Maud, throwing into her tones the utmost unconcern, "but of one thing I assure you, Malcolm Corwin; when I started upon my present enterprise, I took my life in my hand, determined to sacrifice it at any moment the holy cause in which I am engaged should call for it. I consider the information I seek from you to be all important to the Federal cause; therefore I must have it. If it becomes necessary to take *your* life in obtaining it, and thus exposing my own, I will do so on the spot."

The tone and look of the speaker caused a perceptible shiver to agitate Corwin's frame, and he quickly rejoined:

"Well, Miss Pauline, if my life's going to be periled, I don't think I'm bound to keep the thing secret any longer; so I'll just tell you all about it, though for that matter I don't honestly believe it would ever have worked, for both Porter and Ellet are too old and sharp to be very easily taken in."

"What was the plot?" again coolly inquired Maud.

"Well, in the first place," answered Corwin, "we were going to sweep the Mississippi river clear of the enemy's navy!"

"Ah, indeed," smiled Maud, "that was a grand idea! But pray how did you intend to accomplish it?"

"Why, we were going to disguise ourselves as slaves, then coax Porter or Ellet or some of the Yankee commanders up the Yazoo a a little piece. When we got them there, we were going to board them before they knew what we were at. This done, we would have captured the vessels without the slightest alarm. We would then have put out into the river, and with the captured gunboats swept out Farragut and all the rest. Ha! that would have been a splendid *coup d'etat*, as they say now-a-days."

This ill-used mouthful of French brought a smile upon Maud's features; but they quickly became quiet, nay, almost stern, as the sounds of approaching footsteps fell upon the still air of the forest.

It would be a difficult task to say which of the two became really most agitated at this juncture; but both were evidently relieved as they discovered the intruder to be only a poor old negro, trudging along by himself to his hut, most likely to rest himself after the day's hard toil. He had not heard any voices, for he walked steadily on, never turning his eyes, but keeping them ever fixed on the ground before him.

As the solitude became once more unbroken, the heroic Maud again interrogated her companion.

"You were saying," remarked she, "that you intended to coax the Federal commander up the Yazoo; how did you intend to accomplish that portion of the programme?"

"Ha! that was the sharpest part of the dodge," rejoined Corwin; "we were to kidnap some discontented nigger, assist him to escape, and just hint to him before he went, that there were a thousand or two bales of cotton a little distance below Yazoo City, that we'd like to see fall into the hands of the Yankees. You see we knew if anything would fetch them, cotton would be just the article."

"When was this plan to go into execution?" asked our heroine.

"Next Tuesday morning."

"Well, one more question, Malcolm Corwin; or, no—let me see. Just write me off a list of the names of the parties who are engaged in this scheme, where they reside, and where they congregate or rendezvous."

"Oh! now, Miss Pauline, that's too hard!" protested Corwin. But all to no purpose; for Maud was not to be thwarted at a single point, and, weapon in hand, she compelled her unwilling but cowardly companion to obey her order.

By the time the sun sank below the horizon, and the shades of evening began to clothe the forest with the sombre, dreary shades of coming night, Maud Melville had obtained all the information of any value to her, not only in regard to the rebel plot against the Union fleet, but also relative to other matters equally or even more important.

"Well, Miss Pauline," said Corwin, as the gloom became deep, "you've got all the points now that I can give you, and I guess I'll bid you good evening."

"Oh, no, I cannot part with you just yet, my obliging sir," quickly answered Maud; "not until it becomes quite dark. Otherwise, you might induce some of your more patriotic but less cowardly comrades to pursue me all the way back to Farragut's fleet, and perhaps they might take me prisoner, in which event I could not depend upon you to befriend me. After it is quite dark, I will go my way, and you will go yours. When I am out of sight, you may take me if you can."

Maud, while thus speaking, had keenly observed the expression of her companion's face, and there she read with delight that he inwardly chuckled over her remark about Farragut, a remark that she had made purposely to deceive him as to her intentions; for, so far from attempting to reach Farragut's fleet, she determined upon going forward to Vicksburg as the safest plan.

It soon became as dark as our heroine could desire, and after threatening Corwin with instant death if she caught him making any effort to follow her, she ordered him to leave her.

The arrant coward needed no second bidding; but quickly hurried away in the direction of the town.

If he dreamed, however, that his fair captor and liberator remained still in the thicket subsequent, to his departure therefrom, he was sadly mistaken; for the fearless girl followed him swiftly yet quietly, like his own shadow, to the house of a Henry R. Moss, immediately on the edge of the town, and within a short distance of that behind which his comrades had so suddenly disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

TO YAZOO CITY.

MAUD Melville lingered about the little building within whose doors she had seen Corwin enter, until caution imperatively demanded that she should give up the watch, for already curious eyes began to notice her. So, at an opportune moment, she slipped away and plunged into a wooded tract to the Eastward. After walking some distance, she changed her direction to the North-west, so as to strike a road that she knew came out upon the Vicksburg and Warrenton road. This in due time she reached, and traveled along it with all speed possible under the circumstances, until nearly daylight, when, being almost overcome with her previous exertions, she sought out a spot covered with tough, thick bushes. Penetrating to what she considered a safe distance into these, she kneeled down to offer up a prayer of thanksgiving to that Supreme Being in whom she ever, ever trusted.

What a beautiful, what a touching sight was that! Up through the stilly night air, like the sweet syllables of Alpine convent bells, were carried the murmured words of devotion from the lips of the delicately nurtured Maud Melville. She prayed that God would send his good angel to guide her safely amid the perils by which she would be continually surrounded; not for her own sake, but for the sake of the holy cause in which she was engaged,—the cause to which her beloved father, now in heaven, had devoted her. Never did the mellow-

tongued vesper bell call a fairer, or more pious worshiper to devotion.

When Maud had finished, she cast herself upon the earth, and was quickly lost in slumber,—not the startful slumber of a fugitive, but the gentle, refreshing sleep of an innocent child. One peculiar characteristic of our heroine was this supreme belief in the power and will of God. This it was that made her so entirely fearless of danger in accomplishing whatever she deemed it her duty to undertake.

Ere she awoke it was fully noon; but upon seeing it was no later, she once more fell asleep, and did not awaken again until a late hour of the afternoon. Her experience had taught her the value of rest to the system when its powers were constantly on the strain, and she accordingly took advantage of it at every opportunity.

After nightfall, Maud resumed her journey, much refreshed, not only by her slumber, but by a frugal, yet substantial meal, composed of substances small of bulk and exceedingly nutritious, which she carried with her. Besides these articles of food, our heroine kept about her a small bag of the *Coacoa* leaf, so highly prized by the natives of South America.* This precious store, however, she never drew upon except in occasions when other nourishment failed, and the risk attending an attempt to procure any was too great.

As we have said, it was at an advanced hour of the afternoon that Maud Melville awoke the second time. She found that she was close to the beleaguered city itself, and she was at first tempted to make her way into it and survey minutely the fortifications, troops, and general aspects of the place. But though she might easily gain access within Pemberton's lines, it would be quite a different matter getting outside again. In this case, she would be unable to fulfil in time the special mission she had undertaken for General Grant, which was to ascertain all the facts in relation to a quantity of naval stores and supplies that the Rebels were said to have collected on the Yazoo river. She earnestly desired, also, to reach the latter in time to give warning to Admiral Porter's fleet of the intended attack upon it. In view of the importance of time, therefore, our heroine soon decided to leave the inspection of Vicksburg itself for her return trip, and to hasten forward to her destination as rapidly as possible.

In making her way thither, she met with no adventure of any consequence, for she traveled by the most unfrequented roads, main-

* The natives of South America, especially in the mountain countries, will perform the most terribly exhausting journeys with no other support than once in a while chewing this singular leaf. Its invigorating powers are so great that the Indians will be hearty and but little fatigued at the end of the longest journey, though they have little or no other food.

taining, as a general rule, an equal distance between the Yazoo river and the Mississippi Central Railroad. Her reasons for this course were that the Rebels expected General Grant, who had arrived at Young's Point in person, to advance either down the Mississippi and up the Yazoo, or to cross the country above, strike the railroad about Panola, and move a heavy column of cavalry and infantry down to meet a corresponding column of Banks's forces. However unmilitary this idea may seem to even the least instructed, certain it was, our heroine found it to be the accepted one among the rebels. Most likely the previous operations in that region of the indomitable Grant, together with the present movements of the union cavalry raids, inclined them to the belief. They therefore closely guarded the lines indicated, making it extremely hazardous for any one not friendly to the rebellion to be found near them.

Strange to say, Maud, upon arriving at Yazoo City, found hardly any difficulty whatever in entering it and moving with almost perfect freedom anywhere she chose. For this she was at a loss to account, except from the fact that the Rebels had the most supreme confidence in the strength of the batteries at Haines' Bluff, and the torpedoes that had been moored at short intervals from the mouth of the Yazoo. The former were most likely the grand dependence of the Confederate cause in that region, as they were of the most formidable character. For an idea of the invulnerability of the Haines' Bluff fortifications, the reader is referred to Admiral Porter's official report, dated "Yazoo River, May 20th, 1863." That gallant commander, so highly lauded by his friend and co-patriot, General Grant, therein says:

"These works and encampments covered many acres of ground, and the fortifications and the rifle-pits proper of Haines' Bluff extend about a mile and a quarter. *Such a net-work of defences I never saw!*"

Just previous to entering the town, our heroine chanced to cast her eyes toward a little knoll on which was growing some large trees. As she did so, she caught a glimpse of a tall man, who on the instant slipped behind a tree out of her sight. Maud felt convinced that she herself was the object of his attention, and she at once concluded that the stranger was none other than Malcolm Corwin. If it were he, then her ruse to send him in pursuit of herself toward Farragut's fleet had failed. For a moment Maud stood irresolute what to do. In the meantime the stranger stepped boldly from his concealment, and beckoned kindly to her to come to him. It is not probable that she would have done so, had she not noticed that the fellow carried a long rifle across his arm, and was within easy range of her. Instantly

a thought struck Maud that he was one of General Grant's scouts, for had he been a rebel, he would not have hesitated at making the utmost noise in an effort to capture her, whereas he seemed to fear discovery more than she did herself. Quickly her decision was taken, therefore, and as quickly executed; for, with a bold and confident mien, she walked directly over to the stranger, though at the same time preparing to defend herself to the last extremity if treachery were intended.

The first peculiarity that Maud noticed about her unknown companion, was a most singular bluish tinge overspreading his whole countenance.

"I beg your pardon, Miss," at once commenced he as soon as our heroine reached him, "but I'd like to say something to you. I know what you are, though I don't know your name. You're a Union spy from Grant's army. I've been follerin' you ever sence you got past Sulphur Spring. I know what you're coming up to Yazoo City for, at least I oughter know, and afore you went into it I kinder thought it wuz my dooty to tell you that you're a bein' looked out fur there.

"You see there wuz a cowardly sort of a cuss that telegraphed up here from Warrenton, I think, to three of his friends to watch out fur you."

"What were their names?" asked Maud.

"Hallett, Bascombe, and Lynch," replied the stranger.

"Ha!" exclaimed our heroine, "they are three of the gang who reside in the town."

"Not exactly," said the other, coolly; "Bascombe and Lynch don't reside anywhere now, except you call lying stiff and quiet under a head and foot-stone residin'."

Maud could not repress a shudder, for there was in the tones and manner of the speaker a something that told her he was the cause of the death of the two men mentioned.

"What do you mean?" asked she.

"I mean," was the reply, "that Bascombe and Lynch came across me, and this (slapping his rifle) came across them. But come along with me, if you're not afraid of such a bad-appearing man as I am. I'll show you a place where you'll be just as safe as if you'd never left your mother's lap. It's my place, but I'll give it up to you, for I know I can trust you."

Without waiting for an answer, the singular man turned on his heel and walked away.

Maud was thus placed in a new and entirely unexpected predicament. Here suddenly, and in the very locality in which she had

been looking for enemies, she had come upon a friend, at least one professing friendship both for her and her cause. But was it all genuine?

Whether it was or not, our heroine was not a second resolving upon what she should do; for, throwing her trust upon the Staff that never breaks, she hastened away after her mysterious guide, whose personal appearance was really most forbidding, and whose strength, judging from his large frame, was sufficient to annihilate Maud in a moment, had he intended violence.

On casting a look behind him, and seeing his fair companion dauntlessly following, he slackened his pace, and said in gratified tones:

"Thank you, Miss, for your confidence, and I admire your bravery! I don't believe there's one woman in a thousand, 'specially one as beautiful and refined as you are, would follow such a desperate looking fellow as I am."

"Afraid!" exclaimed Maud, smiling gaily; "why, of what should I be afraid? Certainly not of so noble a looking man as you."

It was now the stranger's turn to be surprised; nay, he was more than surprised, he was dumbfounded; and he gazed in silence at our heroine.

"Well," said he at last, and with a very evident tremor in his voice, "may God bless you, beautiful girl, for those kind, gracious words! They are the first that have saluted my ears this many a year that's gone. However, let us hurry on, for it would be hard to tell whether any unfriendly eyes are watching us."

Presently the two reached a rapid stream, which was bridged only by a fallen tree, scarcely wide enough to give passage to one person, and even then requiring dexterity to avoid accident. With a grace and dignity that our heroine had never seen except in refined circles, her rough guide took her hand, and led her upon the fallen trunk, while he himself strode into the water. Several times during the passage Maud made miss-steps, and would have been precipitated into the stream but for the strong arm of her powerful companion, who himself was above his waist in the deepest part of the water.

From the further side of the stream the distance traveled by our heroine and the stranger was perhaps a mile and a half. At this point the latter suddenly halted, and said, as he motioned toward a gorge that seemed choked up with an impenetrable undergrowth:

"There, Miss, is my home; not very attractive, I admit, but it's safe, and not exactly uncomfortable, I assure you. Just stop here a-bit, and I'll return quickly."

Thus speaking, the stranger left Maud and made his way, with much apparent ease, into the depths of the thicket. He was gone several minutes, during which time Maud was deeply, and even painfully pondering her situation; for, notwithstanding all the trust she had put in the stranger, he might, notwithstanding, be a villain,—a rebel in disguise, a robber, a murderer! His manner and his language were certainly not those of a person born and bred in that wild region, and by his own acknowledgment he had taken the lives of Bascombe and Lynch. War, however, was being waged, and perhaps he was justified in the latter.

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNEXPECTED FRIEND.

Our heroine, in reality, wished to fly at the moment, but controlled by one of those indefinable influences that sometimes take possession of the mind, she complied with the invitation extended to her by both the stranger and the negro woman, and followed them into the thicket. She quickly emerged into an open space that had been cleared purposely for the erection of a rough log hut, that she perceived at once was the abode of her strange guide. Doubtless the reader may be incredulous as to the fact of a young, refined, highly educated, and beautiful lady passing through such unlikely scenes; but we must narrate history and truth simply as we find them.

The furniture of the rough cabin was simple and rude in the extreme, and the only touch of refinement there was about it was a shelf holding half a dozen old books, and a common mahogany picture frame hanging over it, containing the likeness of an old lady.

"Pray be seated, Miss," said the stranger, in a manner and tone almost elegant; "you must, indeed, be quite tired out."

This sudden alteration of the stranger's language, from the uncouth South-Western dialect to elegance of expression, showed that the former had been merely assumed.

"An' gi' me yer tings, Missus," added the negress, approaching Maud, and extending her hands to receive the latter's bonnet and mantle, "an' I'll tote 'em away fur ye."

Our heroine complied; not that she wished to, for all her com-

"Confess!" thundered one of the brutes, with a fearful oath, "that you blowed the plan, or down you go in among the snakes!"

pliance seemed from the first to have been mechanical, involuntary.

Within half an hour, however, Maud was fully reassured, and as perfectly at home as she could have been in her own house. After partaking of a capital meal, the most agreeable part of which was a dish of delicious tea, she entered into a long conversation with her host, whose whole history she succeeded in obtaining. We should be pleased to record it as fully as she afterward detailed it, but lack of space forbids more than a condensed sketch thereof in this connection.

Benjamin Livingston, for such was the stranger's name, was well born in Rhode Island, graduated at one of the most celebrated Eastern colleges at an early age, and entered with great promise upon a professional career in his native city. Soon after this he became enamored of a young lady, noted alike for her accomplishments and personal beauty. He loved her devotedly, and firmly believed that she ardently returned his feelings. From this fond dream he was suddenly and rudely awakened. He was spending a season in her company at Newport, for already had she assented to become his wife, and so the matter had been accepted by the friends of both. While at Newport, she made the acquaintance of a Mississippi planter, very wealthy, very aristocratic, and equally base of heart. He cunningly wormed himself into the confidence and heart of the giddy, inexperienced beauty, and one morning Benjamin awoke to the terrible fact that the planter had robbed him of the treasure that he had so deeply valued. Instantly a feeling of vengeance possessed him, and he started in pursuit of the desecrator. From town to town, and city to city, did he trace the villain, but without success, until he reached the little village of Yazoo City—a cotton speculation having called the planter thither. The truant accompanied him. Here one evening he asked her to walk across to a friend's with him, and she assented. It was just as the pair were leaving the village for the purpose mentioned, that Livingston saw them for the first time since leaving Newport, and doubtless the planter imagined that pursuit was over long ago.

The injured man would have rushed at once upon the blaster of his future happiness, but he yearned toward his faithless betrothed. He first wished to be fully convinced that she no longer loved him. So with feverish steps he followed the two as they strolled leisurely along. Presently he noticed the planter leading his fair companion from the road into a piece of woodland, and he quickened his steps that he might not lose sight of them.

Suddenly he heard a wild scream, and bounded forward just in time to behold the unfortunate girl sink to earth, cloven by a savage blow of a gleaming bowie knife, in the hands of her seducer. Already had her loveliness palled his appetite, and thus by foul murder he sought to rid himself of the incumbrance of her presence.

In an instant Livingston was upon the murderer, and though wounded by the latter, quickly overpowered him, and as quickly crushed his vile life out. Next he turned to his betrothed, who only lived long enough to ask and receive his forgiveness, and place her arms about his neck in a last embrace.

The gorge in which he now lived was close at hand, and into this he tenderly bore the remains of the still beloved dead one, and there buried them. The seducer's body was found early the following morning, and close by it a memorandum book, bearing the name and address of Benjamin Livingston. Wealth and position were on the side of the planter, and Livingston, of course, became a fugitive. Chancing to fall in with the negress who now kept his little cabin, he had received from her a preparation made from particular herbs, which so altered his face as to defy recognition, even by intimate friends. His features afterward, however, never recovered their natural color, but always remained of the singular bluish shade that had so forcibly attracted our heroine's attention.

From the night of the fearful tragedy Livingston never sought to quit the region thereof, but, building a little cabin in the gorge where slept his first and only love, he determined to forsake society for ever, and pass his life in solitude. The preparation of the friendly negress had insured him from detection, and out of pure gratitude he had purchased her, and she came to "keep house" for him as she facetiously told Maud. The likeness of the old lady hanging up over the bookshelf was that of Livingston's mother, who had died suddenly a day or two after her son had set out from Newport on his mission of vengeance.

As might be readily supposed, Livingston entertained naught but feelings of hatred toward the Southerners at the commencement of hostilities, and he had been inclined to take up the cause of the Union. But in the first place he disdained to be a spy, which, he said, was not manly, but only a "fit war business for such educated women as Maud Melville." And in the next place he could not bear the slightest restraint on his inclinations by the will of another. He had been gradually becoming, however, more and more interested in the great National struggle, and he had finally, in spite of himself, become absorbed in it. Maud was more delighted at this statement

on the part of her host, as he could beyond doubt lend her the most valuable assistance in the prosecution of her present enterprise.

Time was flying, and our heroine was exceedingly anxious to accomplish both the objects of her journey. She therefore informed her kind protector of her determination to set out the next morning; and he, unable to dissuade her from so early an execution of her resolve, at once volunteered to follow her, and attempt her rescue in case of arrest. It was now Maud's turn to endeavor to dissuade Livingston, but she, like himself, failed.

"Ha!" said he in answer to her remonstrances. "There are few men in these regions would care to trouble me. I do not know the reason, but every one seems to hold a superstitious dread of 'Blue Ben,' as they call me."

"Blue Ben!" exclaimed Maud, as the sobriquet seemed to startle her into a remembrance of some past event; 'Blue Ben!' that is the expression I heard Corwin's companions make use of. They spoke in a threatening manner, as though they intended to injure him."

Livingston nodded his head with a meaning smile as he said quietly:

"Ah, yes! no doubt!"

The next morning, as the sun was just coming up, our heroine left the retreat in which she had been so securely and hospitably entertained, and started across the country for Yazoo City. "Blue Ben," true to his word, followed after her, but kept no closer to her than was necessary to have her always in view.

As though Providence had taken the dauntless girl under its special protection she experienced not the slightest trouble in moving about the city, although every important part was guarded with the greatest apparent vigilance, rendering her discovery at times almost certain.

On one particular occasion she owed her safety to the coolness and tact of her protector. A Rebel sentinel chancing to fix his attention on her, left the spot in which he was standing, to stop her. A moment or so later, "Blue Ben" stumbled so violently against him as to send him heavily to the earth. The ground was rather muddy, the sentinel had on a new uniform, and was of a vain and fiery temperament. He instantly sprang to his feet, a squabble ensued, which ended in "Blue Ben's" begging the fellow's pardon, and slipping a bank note into his hand. In the meantime Maud was gone.

Our fair spy obtained the smallest minutiæ of what she had come to Yazoo City for, and so much encouraged was she by her success, that she was tempted to make an effort to destroy an immense depot of coal that had been collected close to the city, and also the saw mill on the opposite side of the river. In this mill the rebels dressed all

the timber they were using in the construction of the monster ram that was afterward destroyed by Lieutenant Commander Walker. In conjunction with Livingston she was to hazard its accomplishment on the same night. Finding, however, that a strong wind was setting in the direction of the city she relinquished the idea on account of the defenceless women and children. Mercy spoke to her heart in stronger accents than even patriotism, and the coal remained uninjured. Not so with the mill, however, for this she succeeded in firing, and in so ingenious a manner that we will detail it.

The Confederates at this time were dreading some of General Grant's brilliant dashes, and consequently they had that very afternoon placed a strong guard in and around this mill, together with two field pieces. Thus it was impossible to approach it without discovery. In this dilemma Maud's invention came to her aid. She had previously prepared fire-balls of phosphorus, cotton, rosin, naptha, and one or two highly inflammable chemical substances, for the purpose of dropping about the building among the chips and light wood under a long shed that ran along the side of the mill. Just previous to being so dropped, they were to be saturated with a solution that, in a certain length of time, by its chemical action, ignited the mass; and once fired, no amount of water would extinguish the flame.*

Borrowing several rifle bullets from Livingston, Maud placed each in a quantity of the prepared cotton. She next improvised a sling with the aid of some ribbons that she wore. This she gave to her companion, together with the fire-balls, with the request that he try his skill at lodging the latter in the right spots.

"If I had these bullets in my rifle barrel here, I would warrant to send each within an inch or two of where it ought to go," replied he, "but with this kind of a rifle, I'm not quite so sure. However, I'll try it."

The night was dark and cloudy, with a gusty wind; and at the distance the two friends stood from the mill, they could barely make out its dark outlines. As Livingston was straining his eyes through the gloom, in an endeavor to calculate his distance, a shutter on that side of the mill was thrown open, emitting a stream of light from a lamp that hung from a beam in the ceiling.

"A few feet to the right of that light!" whispered Maud, with anxiety and pleasure mingled in her tones, as she laid her hand on Livingston's arm. He then stepped back a pace or two, to allow room for the sweep of the sling.

* Simple phosphorus will burn fiercely even while held completely under water.

A whirr or two, and a snapping jerk, and the first fiery messenger was hurled swiftly toward the mill. No sound followed; though both held their breaths to listen.

"I am afraid it went over the roof; I cast too high," said Livingston. "Let me try another."

This time the leaden bullet was so arranged as to be uncovered on one side, and thus make a noise on striking any hard object. Again the quick whirr, and the snapping jerk, and the second fire-ball was on its way. A sharp stroke that came back to the ears of the friends told that the side of the mill had been struck, and consequently, that the fire-ball had been lodged in about the right spot.

Six in all were thrown, and then "Blue Ben" and Maud watched eagerly for the promised result. Nor had they long to wait, for presently two little twinkling jets, like stars or glow-worms, were seen growing larger and larger; then another and another, until there were four in all. Now came a fear that the fire-balls would be seen by the rebel guards, and extinguished; for they seemed to burn but slowly. Suddenly, however, a blast of wind caught them, and instantly, almost, they leaped wrathfully among the light dry wood, and sprang fiercely up the side of the wall ere their presence was discovered.

An alarm was at once given, but, as Maud and Livingston turned away from the scene, the blazing mill was already lighting up the country round about for a considerable distance.

CHAPTER VII.

MAUD WARNS THE FLEET.

THERE was now but one other object to be accomplished, ere our heroine took the road back to Vicksburg, and that was to hasten down toward the mouth of the Yazoo, in the hope of meeting some one of the Union scouting boats, and thereby warning the fleet of the plot that had been laid by Corwin's gang. One fact in regard to the statement made to her by Corwin, struck Maud as rather peculiar. It had not done so before. He mentioned that the plan was to coax Porter, or some other of the Federal Commanders, up the Yazoo, to capture one or two thousand bales of cotton *just below Yazoo City*

Now, in order to reach any point that was *just below* Yazoo City, a fleet would necessarily be obliged to pass the Haines' Bluff batteries, Upon perceiving the absurdity of the matter, our heroine was about to turn off toward Vicksburg; but, on a second thought, she determined to proceed, as by so doing she would most likely obtain some valuable information about these same formidable batteries.

The latter she reached in due time, and it so happened that as she came in sight of them she beheld Malcolm Corwin, with several companions, taking their way down the river path, toward the Mississippi.

In an instant, she felt convinced that they were setting out upon their diabolical errand, though the location of the mythical cotton would of course be stated at some point below *Haines' Bluff,* instead of below Yazoo City. Her previous determination to inspect the batteries was at once relinquished for the more important one of warning the Union fleet. So without halting, she made a wide detour, came out on the river bank some distance ahead of Corwin's party, and then hastened forward with all speed to the Mississippi. The whole way down, however, she did not come upon the object of her search, and upon reaching the bank of the Mississippi she began to fear that she would not see a vessel. But shortly afterward a tug hove in sight, and was quickly signalled by Maud. The latter was in painful doubt as to whether the boat, being unarmed, would notice the signal; but the captain, being a brave man, came in close enough to see a second and private signal that assured him all was right. A boat was lowered away, and soon reached the fair signaller's feet. Maud hurriedly wrote the details she wished to communicate to General Grant concerning Yazoo City and its stores, handed it to the officer in charge of the boat, and then turned back into the woods.

The next day she saw Corwin and his comrades, with a negro in their midst, marching down the river bank. Shortly afterward the booming of a gun broke through the quiet air, and she felt certain that a gunboat had treated the would-be heroes to a very unexpected salute. The beautiful girl, when on a future occasion narrating this incident, remarked:

"Perhaps it was wicked, but I really experienced gratification as that sound fell upon my ears."

Without waiting to ascertain the fate of the conspirators, our heroine hastened back to Haines' Bluff, or rather to Milldale, just in front of the cannon-bristling Bluff. As before, no trouble overtook the dauntless girl, and she obtained sufficient information concerning

the strength of the place and the weakest points in its defences, though in truth these latter were few enough. There is, however, considerable truth in the old adage, "It's a long lane that has no turning," and Maud unfortunately experienced it. She had completed several fine and very accurate drawings of particular positions and so forth, and concealed them securely from observation about her person, and had succeeded in reaching a point some three miles from Haines' Bluff, when she was surprised and captured by two fierce cavalrymen, who it seems had been sent after her by the rebel Colonel who commanded the post. So well planned, and so unexpected was the attack, that our heroine found herself unable for defence and obliged to surrender to her captors.

One of the latter, with more gallantry than she had looked for, mounted her upon his own horse, after disarming her, and then, taking the bridle in his hand, returned in the direction of the town. Maud was well aware that her doom as a spy would be death; yet so confident was she in her resources that she did not give herself a moment's uneasiness, and chatted so pleasantly and gaily with her captors that she subsequently remarked, "she verily believed they would have let her escape at the time, if she had only thought of asking them."

On being brought into the presence of the Commandant, Colonel Hemmings, the latter, after interrogating her for ten minutes, ordered her to be confined securely in a vacant room. The order was properly obeyed, and our heroine accordingly imprisoned in a little apartment, that was lighted and ventilated only by a narrow slit of a window in the high ceiling. The walls were uncleanly and stained, and the furniture consisted solely of a broken windsor chair, a ragged lounge, a leaf of an old table, and three or four fragments of dirty carpet.

Maud's hopes of escape were somewhat dampened on seeing the unfavorable position of the window or skylight. But with the recuperative power of all French minds, she speedily regained her usual vivacity; and with an equal determination, she had not been in durance twenty minutes before she had made a rickety pedestal of the lounge and bits of furniture, even making the scraps of old carpet subserve her ends.

The great difficulty now was to mount this shaky monument without having it clattering to the floor, and thus alarming her captors. But even this she at last overcame by her persevering efforts. After all, however, she met with a poor recompense; for, on raising her head through the window—which, in passing, we may state had no sash, and therefore was in reality only a trap—she found that in one di-

direction her view was interrupted by some empty barrels piled up with military exactness for some purpose or other. The opposite side brought her no better comfort, for on the edge of the roof was run up, to a height of at least two feet, a boarding like a sign, while the intervening space was occupied by full lines of clothes hung out to dry.

The fair captive quickly got down, arranged each article as it had been when she entered the cell, and cast herself upon the lounge to brood over her misfortune.

Night came ere her solitude was intruded upon, and then came Colonel Hemmings *alone,* dressed and perfumed as though he were going to a ball, instead of a prisoner's cell. Setting the light he carried down, he seated himself upon the lounge, but at a respectful distance from his captive, who, therefore, did not rise, as she had intended to do had he placed himself nearer. In reality, he appeared somewhat embarrassed, and was ill at ease as he opened the conversation.

His object presently became apparent. He wished to play the part of the polished villain that he had doubtless often seen described in highly-wrought sensation novels,—a villain who assumes a vast number of airs while committing crime. As Maud at last comprehended her situation, she became pale with dread; but at the same instant, her ashy lips were pressed firmly together with the determination that possessed her to resist to the death.

"Is this your boasted chivalry?" bitterly cried Maud, "to take advantage of a woman's weakness; to use your superior strength to inflict irreparable injury on one whom God has ordained with virtue alone for her defence."

"I must search you myself for the papers," rejoined the rebel Colonel, his lecherous voice growing husky with gross desire as he spoke.

A moment more, and his hand was upon our heroine's shoulder. Quick as thought Maud started back, turned from the commandant, drew the desired papers (the drawings she had made of the fortifications) from the bosom of her dress, and wheeling about, again faced him. Extending the papers toward him, she said in tones of solemn, even tragic dignity:

"Colonel Hemmings, I have believed it my duty to devote myself to my adopted country. The only manner in which I could serve it to any purpose was by becoming a spy. I did so. I came to the South with my life in my hands for that purpose. I have done your cause, which before God I think is wicked and unjust, much injury.

For my adopted land I have sacrificed my wealth; for it I have sacrificed my friends, my enjoyments, my health; for it I will sacrifice my life; but, thank God, thank God, it does not demand my honor! It will mourn my death, but it shall praise my virtue. Its millions of tongues shall not say that, even in its holy cause, Pauline D'Estraye stained the shrine of womanly virtue. There! take the papers! They will convict me, I know, of being a spy, and I will suffer the fate of a spy. But, Colonel, what my country does not ask of me, you will not force. On my bended knees I ask you."

In the agony of her fear the lovely girl had used her real instead of her assumed name, and the instant Hemmings heard it he started and became pale. His fair companion did not notice this, but with the end of her appeal she sank imploringly before him to the floor, disheveling her long, silky tresses by the act, and exposing to view a locket that she constantly wore about her neck.

"Pauline!"

It was the voice of Hemmings that broke the silence. Passion had suddenly left its tones, and the sound was low and pleading.

"Pauline!" still more gently than before.

For the first time the kneeling girl noticed the change that had come upon the rebel Colonel.

The latter extended his hand, and taking hers, raised her kindly up, saying as he did so:

"Pauline, I fear to ask your forgiveness, but I owe it to you, at least, to explain why the mere mention of your name has recalled me from the ruffian violator to the man. Years ago, when your father resided in Richmond, he saved my life,—saved my name from being blasted for all time. How, or in what way, must ever remain a secret. Sufficient that he did, and that he thereby laid me under a life-long depth of gratitude. Heaven be praised that I have been prevented from doing his memory so heinous an offence, as in my blind passion I would have done.

"I will take these papers from you. I believe it my duty to do so; but God do so, and more also to me, if I harm you in the slightest degree. To-night, at twelve o'clock, I will come for you. A fleet horse shall be in waiting for you without the fort. You can fly without pursuit, and when you reach your own lines, endeavor to forget the damnable wickedness I intended you,—endeavor, Pauline, to forgive me."

The lovely girl, thus suddenly released from her awful peril, gazed vacantly at the speaker, and then, clasping her hands over her heart, and raising her eyes heavenward, she murmured softly, devoutly:

"Father, dear father, far away out of your grave have you stretched forth you protecting arm, and shielded your orphan child! Colonel," she continued, after a pause, in a frank manner extending her hand to her companion, "I forgive you already; as I expect to be forgiven, so I forgive you freely, fully!"

A few minutes later our heroine was once more alone; nor was her privacy broken until midnight, when, true to his promise, Colonel Hemmings entered the apartment, and requested his captive to follow him. She did so, and found a splendid steed awaiting her. She was quickly mounted, and as she was turning away, Hemmings took her hand, and drawing her down toward him, said in a low voice:

"One favor ere we part, Pauline; promise me that you will never breathe to living mortal what has passed to-night."

"I promise it, Colonel; farewell."

"Farewell!"

And farewell indeed it was, and for ever; for the next morning the rebel Colonel was discovered dead in his bed. The post surgeon made an examination of the corpse. No physical cause whatever could be found for the death of the deceased, and therefore it was said that he died "by the visitation of Heaven."

CHAPTER VIII.

A THRILLING ADVENTURE.

RAPID and strange were the thoughts and emotions that flitted like meteors through Maud Melville's mind, as she rode away in the direction of Vicksburg. The latter stronghold was not a long distance away, but in the intervening miles there was no foreseeing what might happen, not only to thwart our heroine's grand object, but even to destroy herself. She had appointed to meet Livingston at a point midway between Haines' Bluff and Vicksburg, he having been obliged, after escorting Maud safely as far as the Bluffs from Yazoo City, to go down to the place named to see a friend, he said, on important business. Not wishing in the darkness to pass this point, Maud wheeled her steed into the woods, when, securing him to a tree, she sought to rest until day-dawn. Just after she had fallen asleep, a violent storm came up suddenly, drenching her to the

skin, and frightening her horse so much that he broke the rein which held him, and dashed away homeward. Maud did not, however, regret his loss, for she was much safer afoot than mounted.

The tempest died away as quickly as it had burst forth, and when the sun rose, the only signs to be seen of it were the dripping foliage and the muddy ground. As our heroine had lost her usual store of provisions, she had recourse to the *coacoa* leaves, to which we have once before referred.

She had not intended to attempt to procure any food in the region through which she was now journeying, but, chancing to espy an old negro crossing a cotton field, through which she was about to pass, she hailed him, and quickly ascertained that he would befriend her. (In passing, we may remark that she nearly always depended for assistance upon the negro slaves, and never but *once* did she say she was betrayed by them.) The old man wanted her to come to his hut, where his wife also lived.

"Dar's only us two, chile," said he, rather mournfully, "dey sold 'de last ob our tree chil'en day befo' yesterday."

A few words of explanation from Maud, however, induced him not to importune her; but he insisted on bringing her a "little suffin t'eat." To this she consented, and hastening away, he presently returned with some fresh corn-bread, a slice of bacon, and an apple. Our heroine could not repress the tears of pity and gratitude that sprang to her eyes, for in that humble present she knew that the poor old man had brought her the choicest dainties his larder could produce.

Upon parting with him she put some money in his hand, and bade him remember her.

"De Lor' bress you 'un, chile!" said he, "de ole' man's head's berry weak, an' berry white, but won't f'git; good bye! de Lor' bress ye!"

So occupied was Maud's mind with this little incident, that she did not keep in the right direction, but got far to the East. How long she would have continued thus it would, of course, be impossible to say; but she was finally aroused by hearing a shrill scream. At once she was on the *qui vive*. A second scream echoed through the woods, and excited Maud so much that she sprang forward at a round pace to ascertain the cause thereof. This she soon discovered. Close on the edge of a deep rugged fissure stood an Octoroon girl struggling with two swarthy villains, who seemed to be attemping to cast her headlong into the opening.

"Confess!" thundered one of the brutes with a fearful oath, "that

you blowed the plan, or down you go in among the snakes down there, that you see hissing for you!"

"Pitch the d——d wench in anyhow, Bill," added the other; "we've got all we wanted, and dead crows never caw!"

This seemed to decide the poor creature's fate, for, dragging her back a pace or two, to give greater force to her fall, the Octoroon's savage captors were about to dash her to the bottom of the fissure, which, from the remarks of the first villain, was one of those loathsome dens selected by serpents to breed in. This was the critical moment, and Maud, springing from the covert in which she had been concealed, leveled her revolver at the would-be murderers.

"Base, heartless fiends! what are you doing?" cried she, with flashing eyes; "one step, and as God hears me, each of you shall die!"

The scoundrels were so astounded that they seemed paralyzed, and, without loosing their intended victim, stood staring at Maud without the power of speech. At this moment the sharp crack of a rifle broke from a neighboring thicket, and one of the miscreants sank dead. His companion would have fled, but for fear of our heroine's weapon. He might just as well have attempted flight, however, for, when about sufficient time had elapsed to load a rifle, a second crack came from the same thicket as the first, and he too was instantly in eternity.

A moment later, and before either Maud or the intended victim herself recovered from her amazement at this sanguinary interposition, Livingston strode forth from the thicket.

"Those villains have met their deserts at last!" said he coolly, advancing to Maud; "but," he continued, in tones of semi-anxiety and admiration, "this is no place for you, Miss Melville; a signal might have brought some comrades of these two vile carcasses, and then your heroic act would have ended far differently. They are not soldiers, but cold-blooded cut-throats, committing just such crimes as you behold."

At this moment the unfortunate Octoroon recovered her senses sufficiently to cast herself at her preserver's feet, and pour forth her gratitude in broken, happy tones. She lived near by, in the house of a wealthy planter, during whose absence the marauders had entered, seized their victim and carried her to this lonely spot, where, by murdering her, they expected to hide for ever all traces of their guilt. Raising her up, Livingston cheered her with words of comfort, and advised her to return to her home immediately. The poor

girl was still so bewildered, however, that she scarcely knew what was said to her.

"We will see you to your home," exclaimed the heroic Maud, in such a manner as to convince Livingston that remonstrance on the peril thus incurred would be useless; so he offered no objection.

Ere setting out, however, he concealed the two corpses, by pitching them down into the serpent's den, with a bitter fierceness that sent a chill through Maud, whose tender heart could never become hardened to scenes of blood, violence, or cruelty.

We have said that our heroine had journeyed in the wrong direction, but it afterward turned out that it was the safest one she could have taken. This fact she learned from Livingston, who had found out that no one was allowed to enter Vicksburg on any of the common roads running North or South, excepting uniformed men. And to reach that rebel stronghold by the railroad from Jackson, required a pass from the military commander at the latter place. Thus it is quite likely that had Maud continued on in the original direction, she would have been discovered and arrested, or else lost most valuable time. The reason the rebels had adopted this course was, that Grant had been making some of his sweeping and mysterious movements on the other side of the river, and they feared his scouts or spies might gain access to the city, and gather information of which he might take the most signal and speedy advantage.

Here was the first real difficulty our heroine had encountered in her present enterprise, and she was obliged to immediately summon all her invention and judgment to carry her through. Strange as it may seem, the first impulse that seized her, and with such strength that she could not banish it, was to rid herself of her companion, Livingston; not that she feared any intentional injury he might do her, for she firmly believed him to be as true as steel, and as honorable as Honor itself. But he was too fierce and deadly in his animosity to the enemy; he scorned to be a spy because it was unmanly, and depended entirely upon his own prowess to carry him through. This was too contracted and useless a policy, and would most likely prove fatal to both in the plot that Maud was about to put into operation. As soon as she fixed the resolution in her mind, she put it promptly into execution, and soon persuaded Livingston to return to his home near Yazoo City, and, on some opportune occasion, attempt the destruction of the coal depot close by the town, which she herself had previously spared. This desperate enterprise exactly suited Livingston's determined courage, and he forthwith undertook its execution, exacting, however, from Maud the promise that *she*

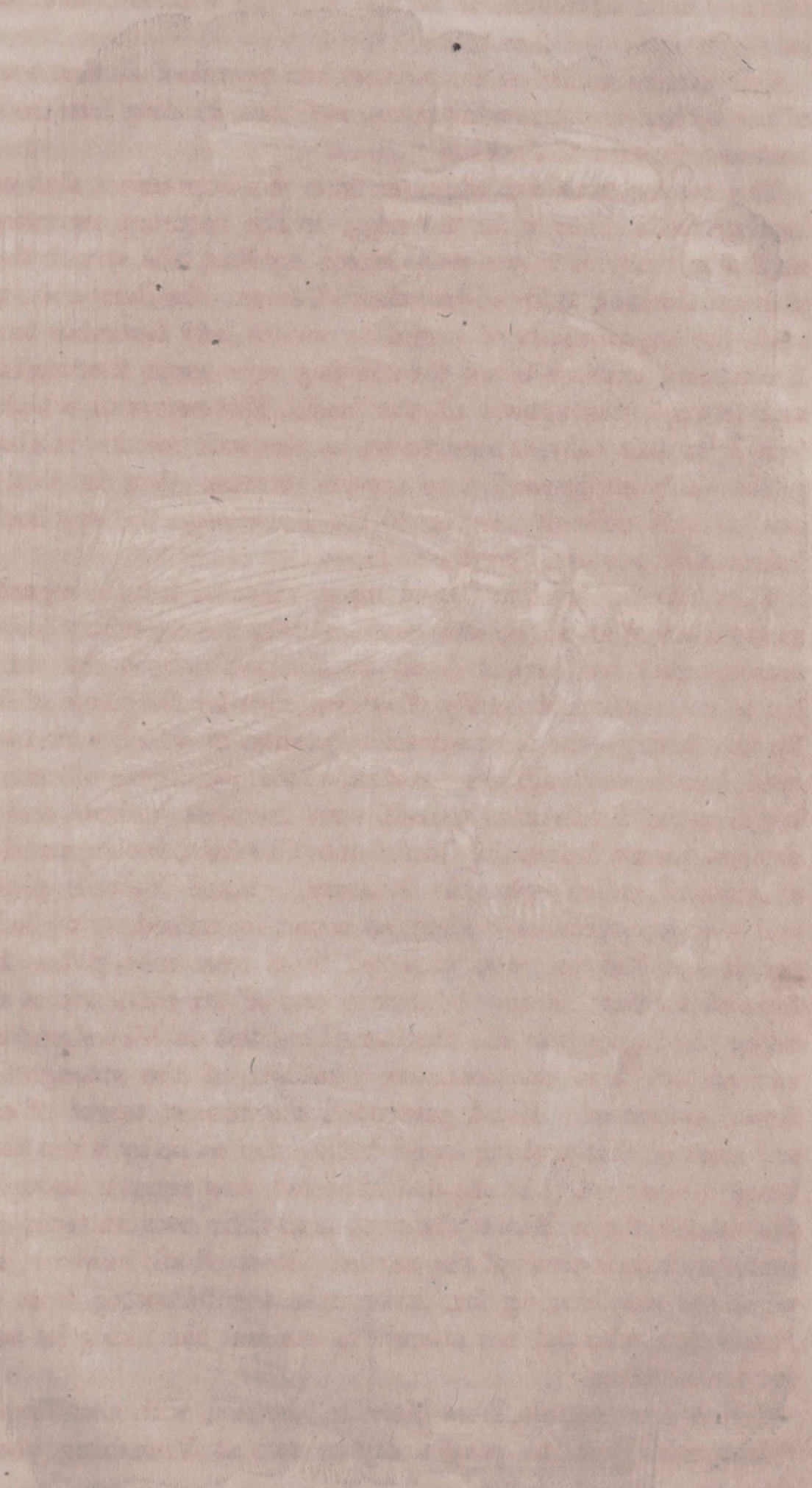
should be exceedingly *cautious*, and not allow herself to be betrayed into any such adventure as he had so lately witnessed and partaken in.

Our heroine smiled at the request, but promised all that was asked of her by her eccentric companion, and then, bidding him God-speed, hastened forward to Jackson.

The reader must not suppose from the expression, that our fair heroine made directly for the city; on the contrary, swerving from an Easterly course to one more North by East, she struck the Memphis and Jackson railroad just above Canton. In Canton she quickly made the acquaintance of a wealthy widow lady favorable to the old Union, and anxious to see the old flag once more floating in pride and triumph throughout all the land. The ease with which Maud found out this lady, whose name, as she still resides in Canton, is prudentially suppressed, may appear strange. But in fact, it was one of little difficulty, owing to the knowledge the spy had of the information possessed by the negroes.

This lady imparted to Maud many valuable facts in regard to the surest manner in which she could obtain the necessary passes, and accompanied her, herself, down to Jackson, where she introduced her to an aristocratic family of secessionists by the name of Ralston. To this family—the most attractive portion of which were two dark-eyed, handsome daughters—several of the Vicksburg officers, including General Pemberton himself, were frequent visitors, and but a day had passed before the Confederate Chieftain, accompanied by two of his staff, called upon the Ralstons. Maud Melville played her role with consummate ability, so much so, indeed, as to half pique the Misses Ralston, who expected to at least monopolize Pemberton and his first officer. Of course one of the main topics touched on by the ladies was the threatened contest at Vicksburg, and the various offensive and resistive qualities of the stronghold were freely canvassed. Maud pretended the utmost terror of cannons, and avowed that nothing could induce her to be by when they were being discharged. As she had expected, this remark brought forth the vaunts of the Misses Ralston, as to their own intrepid firmness under such an ordeal of the nerves. Best of all, however, and just what she was longing for, it brought the following from General Pemberton, who did not attempt to conceal the liking he had taken for our heroine.

"Now I am certain, Miss Melville," he said, with a smiling suavity, "that were you to pass a day or two at Vicksburg, you would



Miss Maud Melville, better known as Miss Pauline D'Estraye, bidding General Grant farewell previous to her departure for Vicksburg.

become so accustomed to the roaring of our pets, as we call them, that they would scarcely startle you from the softest slumber."

The speaker, half turning from Maud to the Misses Ralston, continued in his most gallant manner:

"Ladies, you must take a trip over to the city. We are to have some target practice, and a general overhauling of our works the day after to-morrow; and if a shell or two is used, or a few solid shot are sent against some impudent Yankee craft, it will but add a zest to the entertainment. Come, what say you? *You* will not flinch, I know, as you have already been under fire. Will you not make a veteran of our timid guest?"

No female, we think, ever possessed a nicer discrimination than Maud Melville, and she used her talent on the present occasion to most signal advantage. She begged and protested against the proposed trip in such a manner as to join all her companions, including the two staff officers and Mr. Ralston, in their persuasions. At last, at an opportune moment, she yielded at discretion, and it was decided that the ladies should accompany General Pemberton on his return to the fortifications, which event was fixed for the following day. The happiness of the Misses Ralston was malicious. They agreed that they would give our heroine—who they also agreed had made far too deep an impression on General Pemberton for their peace of mind—a journey through the forts that would make her brain reel. This satisfactory little plot they laid between themselves in the secrecy of their chamber, whilst Maud, at the self same time, was kneeling beside her couch, and praying devoutly to Heaven to be sustained in the hazardous undertaking before her.

The Misses Ralston were ready at an early hour on the morrow for their excursion. In fact, they were ready to start some time before our heroine, whom they rallied considerably before they could induce her not to relinquish the trip. When General Pemberton arrived, the animosity of the two Southern belles was but deepened as he placed himself beside Maud, and gracefully turned them over to the attentions of his two staff officers.

Without any incident of importance, if we except an alarm that grew out of the rumored advance of one of General Grant's raiding columns to cut the railroad, the party arrived safely in the celebrated stronghold of the Rebellion. Until the moment our heroine reached the first line of Rebel pickets, a strange apprehension, a heaviness, as it were, had oppressed her; but, once within the military precincts of the city, all her prowess and spirit returned to her, and she became the most vivacious of the party. It was proposed

by Miss Kate Ralston, who was an expert equestrienne, as was also her sister, that horses should be furnished, and the intended inspection made in the saddle. On seeing that the fair and timid Maud opposed not the proposition, General Pemberton seconded it at once. Whilst Kate, with sparkling eyes, was whispering to her sister concerning the intended triumph, for she doubted not Maud was as fearful of prancing steeds as she was of booming cannon, our heroine asked the General to allow her to ride the most intractable steed in his stables.

"Never fear, General," she said, gaily, "I can ride if I *am* afraid of your terrible guns."

The Rebel chieftain, though he was not quite sharp enough to see through General Grant's plot, felicitated himself that he saw through Maud's plot against her vain companions. So he arranged it that each lady should select her own steed. When it came to Maud's turn, she chose an animal that an experienced groom assured her, not only on his personal honor, but also on his reputation as a horseman, would break her neck as sure as she mounted him. But all to no purpose. Maud feared him not, and had him saddled and bridled, an operation which induced the fierce but noble brute to exhibit a few of his wicked qualities most advantageously. Ere mounting, however, Maud looked well to the bit and reins, and had both altered to suit her own ideas. Several efforts to gain the saddle were thwarted by the restiveness of the horse, but at last Maud was fairly seated. And now commenced a terrible struggle for the mastery, the termination of which no spectator dared to determine.

Like an Amazonian queen did Maud hold to her plunging throne, from which she could not be easily cast. The enraged animal reared until all eyes were closed to avoid beholding him topple over on his rider. He turned his head, and fiercely snapped at his fair burden; but the instantly-drawn rein and terrible iron bit forced him to relinquish the attempt. Finding that all his efforts were unavailing, he at last, and with the suddenness of a thunderbolt, dashed away toward the Mississippi in a maddened flight. The groom was delighted, and, amidst all the terror that others expressed in looks or wild exclamations, he said:

"She'll do, General! she'll bring that young man back all right, and docile as a thrashed puppy!"

This remark seemed to awaken the whole party as from a trance of horror, and they instantly gave chase.

Now it was that the brilliant, daring mind of our heroic spy rose to sublimity. In the midst of all the terror and excitement she was

creating, and with her frantic steed shaking flakes of foam and blood from his mouth, she, as cool as an iceberg, was keenly noting everything about her—the positions of stores, magazines, parks of artillery, shell, shot, teams, batteries—taking in all at a glance.

Suddenly, however, her attention was arrested by a short, thick-set dragoon, who, seeing her coming down toward him. planted himself directly in the path she must take, and drew a carbine to his shoulder. This act alone amounted not to much, for perhaps his intention was to wound the runaway horse, and rescue the rider. But just as he raised the weapon, he thundered:

"*A spy! a spy!*"

"God aid me now!" prayed Maud, between her shut teeth, as, at the same instant, *she recognized in the dragoon one of the two men who had pursued and taken her back to Colonel Hemmings at Haines' Bluff!*

As she spoke almost, the dragoon sighted his piece directly at her breast, and pulled the trigger. The carbine failed of a discharge, however, and there being no time to reload before the flying steed would be upon him, the dragoon leaped to one side as a matter of personal safety.

"On that man's death," said Maud, when afterward narrating the incident to one of General Grant's staff, "I felt that an issue depended of more value than my own life, and in an instant *I determined he should die!* My flying animal was now too close to him to permit of a second exercise of his agility, and drawing with all my strength on the left-hand rein, I swerved my rushing steed toward him. The man was at heart a coward; for scarcely had he perceived my real intention, and seen, also, that he could not escape, than the blood left his features like a flash of light, and with a mute, imploring look of agony, he raised his hands and sank on his knees. It was too late, however, and, though my heart relented at the moment, I could not alter his fate; though it will ever be a satisfaction to me to know that I strained every nerve to avert the catastrope. Poor, wretched coward, my furious steed charged down on him like an avalanche, and it seemed as though I could feel the shuddering of his soul as it was crushed and spurned from his quivering body by the iron-shod feet of my horse. Oh! it was a sickening, horrible sensation, and, as God is my judge, I would rather have died a thousand deaths than have experienced it.*

Maud's maddened flight was not continued any distance after the

* Perhaps some one of our readers has experienced this awful sensation spoken of by our heroine, while riding in a carriage, or train of cars, over the body of some human being.

rebel dragoon was ridden down, for the horse, finding it useless to attempt to rid himself of his rider, slackened his pace, and surrendered himself to the will of the latter.

Our heroine immediately wheeled about, and rode back to the spot where lay the disfigured body of the man who had so ruthlessly endeavored to take her life. She reached it a moment after her companions did. Upon finding that the man was dead, General Pemberton's staff officer ordered the corpse to be removed for burial.

With this tragic incident the ride ended, the horses were put up, and while the ladies spent the rest of the day within doors, General Pemberton and his officials were busy with some alterations of batteries, that were necessary in consequence of some movement by General Grant, the character of which, however, Maud did not learn.

These various indications of Grant's activity made our heroine uneasy, lest by losing too much time she should fail in reaching the Federal Commander at a sufficiently early season to render her information of any value. She could only await circumstances, however, no matter what the result might be.

As evening was drawing on, General Pemberton proposed a carriage ride down the river bank, which his fair guests readily accepted, and none more willingly than Maud, for she could thereby enjoy an unsuspected inspection of several highly important points.

The weather was beautiful, rendering the scenery most enchanting, and the trip was very agreeable to all, but most especially to our heroine, who was, as may be supposed, innocently inquisitive about those "horrid cannons," and those "deadly piles of missiles." Completely off his guard, the Rebel General took great pains to describe and explain everything to his lovely visitor, who took care to exhibit as commendable an ignorance of military matters as she did a naive curiosity concerning them.

After a short time it was proposed by the Misses Ralston to ascend to the top of a high bluff, from which a fine view could be obtained of the river and surrounding country. The proposal was no sooner made than it was accepted. Upon reaching the summit of the bluff, Maud, separating herself from her companions, sauntered to a projecting knoll directly on the brow of the cliff, and strained her eyes far away up the opposite bank, in hopes of being able to discover the Federal army, or a portion of it. As she sat there wholly absorbed in thought, she presented a lovely appearance. The breeze was now and then lifting her long tresses—the only ornament in which was a single natural flower—lightly off her white, rounded

neck and shoulders, displaying the fullest charms of the latter allowed by the modestly cut boddice. Maud's dress consisted simply of a pale, rich silk, without trimmings, and a long mantle or duster of the same material. This plain attire, though it at once set off our heroine's peculiar beauty to the greatest advantage, afforded a striking contrast to that of her companions, whose jewelry alone was worth a small fortune.

So intensely was Maud's attention fixed on the distant landscape, that she did not note the rapid sinking of the sun, nor the lengthening shadows of approaching night. In truth she had fallen into a sort of reverie, from which she was only startled by the dull, distant rumble of a very heavy gun, which, from the *rounded* or *blunted* sound, her experienced ear at once recognized as having been fired from aboard a ship.

[This difference of sound between a piece discharged from the deck of a vessel and a piece in land battery, is very distinct.]

Maud was not the only one startled, however, by the distant roar, for, as she was wondering what could have been the reason thereof, General Pemberton approached and informed her that the ladies and himself were about to return to the city. His manner was as courteous and affable as before, but Maud easily discovered a deep anxiety on his mind. She at once acquiesced, and the party were soon driving back at a good speed.

"Perhaps, General," remarked Miss Kate Ralston, in the course of the conversation that ensued, "that explosion was a signal for the horrid Yankee fleet to advance and attack your stronghold."

"In which event," replied Pemberton, "the fate of that fleet would be sealed for ever."

"Surely, General, you would have some mercy," said Maud, with a half-mischievous smile, "at least whilst I am in the city, for I should certainly die from sheer fright."

"I would issue a special order for your benefit, Miss Melville," laughed Pemberton; "but believe me you would not only not expire, but you would, on the contrary, become so fascinated with the excitement attending a cannonade, that you would not retire to safety even if I should myself request it. I am somewhat versed in human character, and I am certain you are possessed of most extraordinary coolness and bravery. Do you know, Miss Melville," continued the speaker, "*you would make a capital spy!*"

It took all our heroine's power to control the feelings that this remark brought to life within her, but she succeeded, and shortly afterward turned the conversation in another channel.

CHAPTER IX.

MAUD HEARS OF "BLUE BEN."

FOR several days past it had been suspected that Admiral Porter intended to endeavor to push his gunboats and transports past the Vicksburg batteries; and as, of course, night would be the selected time for such a desperate venture, General Pemberton had prepared huge piles of light wood and other combustibles, which were ready to be fired at the first alarm, and with their flames illuminate the river, in order that the rebel gunners might see the Federal vessels, and range their pieces correctly.

The night passed without an alarm, however, and early the succeeding morning commenced the grand target practice and general overhauling that the Rebel commander had spoken of to Maud. Our heroine was exceedingly and most judiciously nervous at first; but presently she began to recover, and so rapidly, indeed, as to elicit a compliment from General Pemberton.

In the midst of the inspection, an urgent message came for the Rebel commander's attention somewhere else, and he was obliged to leave his fair visitors in charge of an aid, whose vanity and desire to display his military lore, led him to detail the minutest matters in regard to the guns and fortifications, and the manner and time in which each would be used in case of an attack.

When our daring spy had gathered all the information that it was possible to obtain, she became anxious to return to General Grant. From what she had heard within the past week, she was satisfied that the Federal commander had relinquished his plan of attack by the North and North-east routes, in which case there was only the Southern approach left. To use this, his army must pass below Vicksburg, either by marching down on the opposite bank, or by risking a passage in the transports. There was one thing, in this view of the situation, that Maud felt she ought to do, and that was to go over several of the most likely roads of approach to Vicksburg, from the direction of Grand Gulf, in order that she might be enabled to properly guide any column or columns of troops that might advance on them.

It was no easy task, however, to leave her admiring friends, or rather, we should say, friend, for the two Miss Ralstons would have been delighted to see her depart, whereas General Pemberton was so

smitten with her that he would scarcely listen to her going away. Besides, he told her, he felt well assured that General Grant would soon make an approach on the city from that direction; that already there were some signs of such a movement in the enemy's camps; and that for a beautiful Southern lady to fall into the hands of the vile Yankees would be a fate worse than death.

Whilst Pemberton was endeavoring to persuade Maud to remain a few days longer, a post-messenger arrived from Colonel Williams—the successor of Colonel Hemmings—to announce that the immense depot of coal at Yazoo City had been almost totally destroyed by fire, which had been applied by a traitor named Livingston, better known by the soubriquet of "Blue Ben." He was seen lurking about the depot as the fire burst forth. When he started to escape, a volley was fired after him, and he was seen to fall. As his body could not be found, however, it was supposed that, instead of being killed, he had been mortally wounded, and crawling away to some thicket, had there died. Colonel Williams added that his men—the rebels—were so enraged at the base incendiary that they went immediately to a cabin he inhabited, where, finding an old negress who refused to confess any knowledge of her master, they promptly hung her to a rafter of the building, fired the latter, and waited till naught was left but a smouldering heap of ruins.

"The worst feature of this affair," added Williams, "is that it prevents the naval movement which we intended to make down the Yazoo within two days upon the Federal fleet. And how long it will be before we can make another attempt, the Lord only knows."

General Pemberton had met with several disasters lately, and this last one appeared to fall so heavily upon him as to considerably crush even his gallantry, and he ceased to urge a continuance of the visit of his lady guests.

This was exactly as Maud wished it; but still she was careful, on bidding the rebel chieftain adieu, to be more than usually fascinating.

Upon leaving Vicksburg, it became our heroine's great object to get clear of the company of her companions, the Misses Ralston, without exciting their suspicions. This she soon effected, however, and then she set forward to accomplish the last portion of her programme, or to meet the same fate as she knew had befallen the rash but brave Livingston.

The triangle of country included between lines run from Vicksburg, Jackson, and Grand Gulf, or Rodney, may, and doubtless does, appear on the map to be a diminutive space, and easily gone over; but, when it is remembered that this diminutive space is intersected

by important roads and streams, each of which was, at the period of which we write, under at least occasional guard, the time and tact required to obtain correct and reliable information thereof may be partially imagined. Yet the risks incurred and the hardships endured by our heroine in accomplishing this object cannot be even imagined.

She was at last successful, however, and arrived in safety, but much worn in mind and body, at the spot in which she had concealed her boat, which, to add to her satisfaction, she found uninjured and ready for use.

It has been truly observed of General Grant that, from the very first moment of having a command, he has invariably been lucky; and this favor seems to have been accorded by Fortune to every one connected with the hero of the Mississippi.

Maud Melville, while making her way through the region of country mentioned, had, on several occasions, heard cannonading in the direction of the river, and had heard reports as to the Union vessels running the batteries, and again of their being all sunk. In fact, a thousand different and bewildering rumors came continually to her ears. But, making every allowance for exaggeration, she did expect, when she struck the Mississippi at the point she did, to see at least one or two Union gunboats. As far as she could see, however, she beheld nothing breaking the surface of the mighty river save the occasional floating trees, or now and then a barrel, a box, or the dead carcass of some animal.

As night approached, a strong wind from the Southward set in, with a tendency to chop about from South-east to South-west. Our daring heroine determined to take advantage of this, and sail up the river, pass Vicksburg a second time, and, if possible, communicate with General Grant. No one not acquainted with the Mississippi river can conceive of the peril of such an undertaking, on such a night. A staunch, powerful steamer would, in nine chances out of ten, be sunk in such an attempt; and therefore the chances of escape for a frail, open skiff, under sail, were apparently none at all. But when anxiety and duty control the human mind, there is naught it will not essay to do.

It was about eight o'clock, P. M., that Maud Melville stepped into her frail craft, and pushed it out from the bank upon the rushing current. It was whirled round in several eddies before it came fairly under control, and then, catching the full force of the wind, it shot up stream like a frightened bird.

No cheering multitude encouraged the intrepid girl with plaudits.

There, in the darkness of the night, and all alone, she was battling the angry river, with none to place hope in save Him whose habitation was far beyond those glistening stars above her.

The perilous voyage became more and more fearful every moment. The wind increased in strength, and heavy clouds began to drift up from the horizon over the sky, shutting out even the encouragement of the starlight, while the river rushed along with more fury than before. Our heroine's situation was indeed becoming most desperate.

"It was," she afterward said, "the most fearful scene through which I ever passed. The sky quickly became one inky mass, through which the most awful lightning and thunder continually broke. But still I pressed on, for I could do nothing else.

"I was now passing Vicksburg, as I could see the glimmering of lights in the city and batteries, and I almost wished myself safely ensconced with the rebels once more.

"In the midst of this turmoil, however, a new event occurred. Out on the river I suddenly saw two streams of flame and sparks, which I instantly knew must proceed from the smoke-stack of a steamer, and I was at once forced to the conclusion that one of the Federal vessels was attempting to pass the batteries. Scarcely had I made this discovery ere a fresh thunder broke on my ears. Flash went a rebel gun, and through the black darkness above me screeched a huge shell, that exploded astern of the steamer. A few moments later, one of the piles of combustibles prepared by Pemberton sent out a glaring flame across the river, and a second gun, this time from the heavy water battery, belched forth a huge missile at the vessel. This one struck its mark, but I had not time to note more, for a volley of musket balls that whistled about me, warned me that my boat had been seen by the rebels, and was within their range. By the time a second volley was fired, however, the fierce, but now friendly wind, had carried me out of reach. At this juncture the rain poured down in torrents, dampening the rebel fire, while the steamer, either sinking, or shutting off steam, sent out no more tell-tale sparks.

"The storm presently began to abate, and I headed my frail but faithful boat over toward the Louisiana shore, which, Heaven ever be praised for its mercy, I reached safely, though well-nigh exhausted, just below Milliken's Bend. My first care was to dismantle and conceal the little craft, and then I calmly awaited the coming of daylight. When the sun rose I set out, confident of soon meeting some cavalry detachment of General Grant's army."

The surmise of our heroine was correct, for she had not gone far before she fell in with a scouting party. The officer in command of the latter was evidently nonplussed to account for her presence in such a locality, and in such an evidently exhausted and sorry condition, for the tempest and the muddy roads had sadly spoiled her toilet. Her natural loveliness, however, and her refinement of manner, at once enlisted the sympathies of the susceptible and dashing officer, who did everything in his power to render her comfortable, most especially as she expressed such a strong desire to see General Grant at once. Personally he knew nothing of the whereabouts of the Union Chief, but promised before long to put Maud in the right channel for finding him.

This he presently did, and, after various vexatious delays, our heroine at last had the supreme satisfaction of greeting General Grant in person. The gallant hero was much gratified at seeing our heroine safely returned, and was delighted with the copious and highly valuable information she brought him.

The anxiety, excitement, and exposure which Maud had endured while among the rebels, combined now to debilitate her system, and rest became absolutely necessary to a restoration of her powers. By the time General Grant really made his grand advance on Vicksburg, however, she was fully recovered, and accompanied the victorious Army of the Union on its memorable march.

The details of how the indomitable hero of the Mississippi, ably seconded as he was at every turn, by the equally indomitable Porter, made his way from Young's Point past the Vicksburg and Grand Gulf batteries, have already become so familiar to the reader, that it is entirely unnecessary to repeat them here. Suffice it to say, that by the end of April, 1863, the bright flag of the Union was being borne proudly and triumphantly toward the doomed city, by the gallant Army of the Tennessee.*

* The gallant army of which General Grant was Commander holds the official title of "The Army of the Tennessee." The Army of the Mississippi would be much more appropriate, and tally better with the grand achievements of that noble host.

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